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'Will not allow even .5% quota for Muslims'

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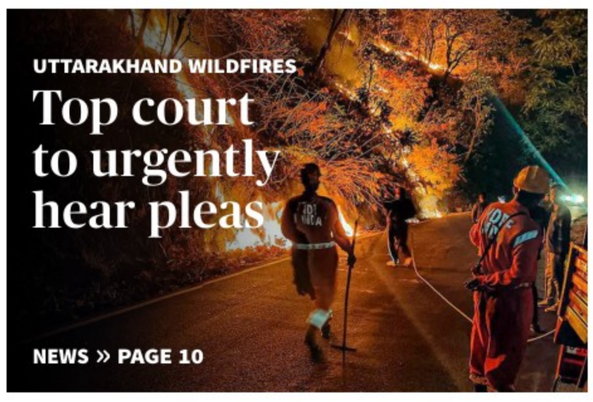

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Top court to urgently hear pleas

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A rapid decline in recent years

It is ranked 159 out of 180 nations in the latest index

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NEARBY

Acid test for many veterans, new entrants

BENGALURU
The second phase of polling in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies on Tuesday will see a bipolar electoral contest between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnataka. » Page 4

HC orders Bitcoin scam accused to appear before SIT

BENGALURU
The High Court of Karnataka, after hearing three petitions seeking the quashing of two FIRs and a proclamation order, has directed the accused in the Bitcoin scam to appear before the IO on May 8 at 9 a.m. » Page 2

Hamas accepts ceasefire proposal by Egypt, Qatar

Israel yet to comment on deal, which came hours after it ordered an evacuation of 1,00,000 Palestinians from the city of Rafah in southern Gaza; details of the truce proposal still unclear

Associated Press
JERUSALEM

Hamas announced on Monday it has accepted an Egyptian-Qatari proposal for a ceasefire to halt the seven-month-long war with Israel in Gaza, hours after Israel ordered 1,00,000 Palestinians to begin evacuating from the southern city of Rafah, signalling that a long-promised ground invasion there could be imminent.

There was no immediate comment from Israel on the deal, and details of the proposal have not yet been released.

In recent days, Egyptian and Hamas officials have said the ceasefire would take place in a series of stages during which Hamas would release hostages it is holding in exchange for Israeli troop pullbacks from Gaza.

Uncertain times: People flee Rafah, after the Israeli military began evacuating Palestinian civilians from the city on Monday. REUTERS

End to war?

It is not clear whether the deal will meet Hamas's key demand of bringing about an end to the war and complete Israeli withdrawal.

Hamas said in a statement that its top leader, Ismail Haniyeh, had delivered the news in a phone call with Qatar's Prime Minister and Egypt's Intelligence Minister.

After the release of the statement, Palestinians erupted in cheers in the sprawling tent camps around Rafah, hoping the deal meant an Israeli attack had been averted.

Israel's closest allies, including the U.S., have repeatedly said Israel shouldn't attack Rafah. The looming operation has raised global alarm over the fate of around 1.4 million Palestinians sheltering there.

Aid agencies have warned that an offensive will worsen Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe and bring a surge of more civilian deaths in an Israeli campaign that in nearly seven months has killed 34,000 people and devastated the territory.

U.S. POSITION
» PAGE 14

SC seeks report as T.N., ED spar over sand mining case

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The ED has been told to file a compliance report on the documents it sought. FILE PHOTO

The Supreme Court on Monday sought a report from the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) even as the State of Tamil Nadu maintained that District Collectors have appeared before the Central agency and supplied it with records about illegal sand mining sought from them by the anti-money laundering body in its summons.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice Bela Trivedi, senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Amit Anand Tiwari, for Tamil Nadu, complained that the senior officials were made to remain at the ED office from 11 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.

"They are District Collectors. They cannot do this to these senior officials," Mr. Sibal submitted.

Meanwhile, the ED said "no documents or details" were given by the District Collectors to the Central agency.

"Whatever requisite documents asked from the Collectors have been submitted," Mr. Sibal countered.

The Bench directed the ED to file a compliance report, detailing the documents sought from the Collectors in the summons and what among these records were allegedly not produced by them.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Soren seeks early hearing of appeal against arrest

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren made an oral mentioning before the Supreme Court on Monday to urgently hear his appeal against his arrest on money laundering charges.

Appearing before a Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Soren, said polling in Jharkhand for the Lok Sabha election was due on May 13, and that he should be allowed to campaign for his party.

"The judgment in my case against my arrest was reserved by the High Court in February. Finally, we had to appeal to the Supreme Court with a petition for interim bail," Mr. Sibal explained.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Stage set for third phase of polling for 93 seats today

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A total of 93 Lok Sabha constituencies in 12 States will vote in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election on Tuesday.

Initially, the Election Commission had announced 94 seats for polling in the third phase. Later, polls in Betul were postponed to May 7, making it 95 constituencies.

However, soon thereafter, the election to the Anantnag-Rajouri seat was deferred to May 25 and Surat, where voting was supposed to take place on May 7, elected a BJP candidate unopposed, thus reducing the number of seats going to the polls to 93 in the third phase.

In the fray are over 1,300 candidates, including around 120 women. Over 11 crore people are eligible to vote in this phase.

The constituencies where voting would be held include 25 seats in Gujarat, 11 in Maharashtra, 10 in Uttar Pradesh, 14 in Karnataka, seven in Chhattisgarh, five in Bihar, four each in Assam and West Bengal and all two in Goa.

The star candidates include Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Digvijaya Singh.

Also on the table is the battle between veteran NCP leader Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule and Sunetra Pawar, wife of Mr. Pawar's estranged nephew and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, from the family pocket borough of Baramati in Maharashtra.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Poll heat: Election officials leave to a polling booth at Lal Parade Ground in Bhopal on Monday. A.M.FARUQUI

Sketches of suspects in IAF convoy strike released; manhunt on

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Security personnel stand guard in Poonch on Monday. PTI

Sketches of two suspected terrorists, who are believed to be behind the attack on an Indian Air Force (IAF) convoy on May 4, were released by the Army on Monday, as the manhunt continues in the forest area of Poonch.

A massive combing operation is ongoing in areas adjoining Shahstar, including Sheindra, Danna Top and Sanai Top.

The Army has also announced a reward money of ₹20 lakh for those who would provide any inputs. "Anyone who will give any fruitful and reliable information about the whereabouts of these terrorists, leading to their arrest will be rewarded and their identity will be kept a secret," an Army official said, in a statement.

Two or three militants are suspected of being involved in the attack near Shaistar Sanai in Surankote, Poonch, on Saturday afternoon.

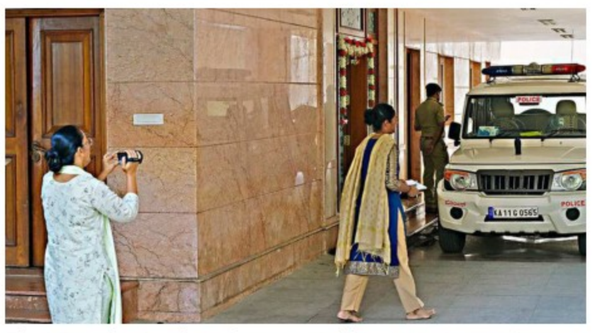
Around two dozen locals have been questioned by the security forces after the attack.

Those possessing Prajwal's videos also liable to face legal action: SIT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst concerns that the explicit videos of alleged sexual abuse by Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna were being freely distributed on social media platforms, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case has said that not just those who distribute but even those who are in possession of such videos are liable to face legal action.

Concerns have been raised about the videos, which do not mask the faces of the women who allegedly faced abuse, exposing those who are already vulnerable.



The SIT conducting the mahazar at JD (S) MLA H.D. Revanna's residence in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

A press note issued by the SIT chief on Monday said that as per the Information Technology Act, 2000, "originator" means a person who sends, generates, stores or transmits any electronic message or causes any electronic message to be sent, generated, stored or transmitted to any other person, but does not include an intermediary.

"Therefore it is advised to the general public to delete the video/audio/photos of the victims of sexual crimes from their devices to avoid legal action," the press note warned.

Meanwhile, SIT sleuths are grilling former Minister and father of Prajwal Revanna, H.D. Revanna, who was arrested in an abduction case and remanded in police custody till May 8.

MORE REPORTS ON
» PAGE 3

City's first heavy rain of the year results in flooded roads and traffic gridlocks

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a prolonged dry spell of over five months and low intensity rainfall for about two days in the last week, many parts of Bengaluru received intermittent rainfall through Monday evening, resulting in inundation of several roads. This was the heaviest rainfall the city received this year after a drought-hit 2023.

Several roads were inundated and tree fall incidents were reported in many areas of Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

As per the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) reading at 8.30 p.m., Bengaluru City Station had recorded 10.5 mm rainfall, HAL 2.7 mm. The KIA station had recorded 3.9 mm up to 5.30 p.m., while the IMD said there was no update post that. However, intermittent rain continued well into the night.

According to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palika Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath , around 21 wards were affected. While several roads were inundated in some wards, tree fall incidents were also reported in many. Mr. Giri Nath said about 45 trees fell due to gusty winds.

According to BBMP officials, roads in 33 locations saw inundation following which the police diverted the traffic. "Majestic was choked, and K.R. road was blocked up to Hudson Circle," the traffic police said.

Motorists struggled to wade through waterlogged roads. In some places, traffic came to a grinding halt and autos and cabs either refused bookings on ride-hailing apps or were expensive.

RELATED REPORT ON
» PAGE 2

Antonio Habas: Mohun Bagan's shield-winning coach who found a home in the City of Joy

Having taken charge of the club mid-season, the gaffer guided MBSG to its maiden League Winners Shield and yet another Indian Super League final

SPORTSPICZ/ISL

Neeladri Bhattacharjee

At full-time, Antonio Lopez Habas had his hand on his head. The Mohun Bagan Super Giant head coach had failed to beat Mumbai City FC in two finals over four years.

But for the Mohun Bagan faithful, he has been nothing short of a legend, with chees of "Habas! Habas!" ringing around the stands before kick-off.

Having taken charge of the club mid-season, in January 2024, he guided the team to its maiden Indian Super League Winners Shield and yet another ISL final - a record-extending fourth for Habas.

"In my case, it might be true (that ISL is synonymous with Habas). But that information is not important or relevant. What matters is Mohun Bagan now and how it performs," Habas said.

MBSG started the 2023-24 season on a high - winning the Durand Cup, beating East Bengal in the final. But as the season progressed, injuries and international duties saw around nine players out of the team.

Mohun Bagan's form fell, losing three consecutive games in the AFC Cup and as many back-to-back games in the run-up to the Kalinga Super Cup.

Its loss to EBFC in the Super Cup semifinal in December was the final nail in the coffin as its head coach, Juan Ferrando, was replaced by Habas.

In four months, the Spaniard has not just taken the club to two finals but has gotten the best of players - Anirudh Thapa and Liston Colaco - who were otherwise struggling under Ferrando.

Learning from Benitez and international exposure

Habas belongs to the breed of managers who have had a rather low-key profile as a player, playing mostly in Spain's second division and retiring at 29 with a knee injury.

He started his coaching career with the reserve side of Atletico Madrid in 1990 and within three years, he was assisting Xabier Azkargorta at the Bolivian national team - where he had his first prominent stint as manager.

In his two spells with La Verde (first as an assistant and then as manager), he took them to the quarterfinals and finals, in 1995 and 1997, respectively. It was Bolivia's best performance in over two decades.

In the 1997 Copa America final, his team finished second-best to only Brazil, under World Cup-winning manager Mario Zagalo.

"Brazil had a fantastic team, with world-class players such as (Claudio) Tafarell, Cafú, Roberto Carlos, Dunga, Edmundo (Neto) and Ronaldo.

"Bolivia put up a big fight by drawing the match 1-1 on half-time and making four shots to Tafarell's goalposts, but Ronaldo tilted the match in the end for Brazil," the Spaniard told *Goal* in a previous interview.

After the turn of the 21st century, he worked as assistant coach to Rafael Benitez in Spain as Valencia won the LaLiga title in 2002.

But in India, his experience bore fruits from the inaugural season of the ISL, where Atletico de Kolkata, under his management, beat Kerala Blasters 1-0 to win the trophy - one that marked his love story with Indian Football.

"It is a good time for me (here) because I coached Bolivia, Bolivar, and then won the league title with Benitez's Valencia, the UEFA Cup and the Super Cup. Then I coached in South Africa (Mamelodi Sundowns in the South Africa Premier Division). I am very proud and happy to be here," Habas said.

In a decade of his stay in India, he has won almost half of all matches (48 percent) he has managed, losing just 12 of his 118 games, winning three trophies, two ISL trophies and one Shield here.

Style of play

Habas, though starting with a 4-3-1-2 formation while managing Bolivia, has preferred a three-man defence over the years, with the same trend following at Mohun Bagan this season.

Using a 3-1-4-2 shape, he has maximised wing-play for the Mariners and Manvir Singh and Liston Colaco have proved effective in the same under him. Unsurprisingly, three-fourths (75.4 percent) of Mohun Bagan's attacks have happened through the flanks this season.

His team has typically walked the road of pragmatism for results, looking for an early lead and then using two blocks of defence - the centre-backs with two defensive midfielders and wing-backs in front - to defend the lead.

Mohun Bagan scored 26 goals in the first half, including Jason Cummings' strike in the final, the highest among all ISL teams this season.

The approach, however, is not as defensive as Jose Mourinho's park-the-bus and the side maintains balance with chances to attack against the run of play through the wings.

The best part of his plans is every player is designated concrete roles, which keeps his instructions discreet.

It is here that a midfielder like Anirudh Thapa has shone well, playing as a No. 10 instead of being a mix of No. 6 and No. 8 under Ferrando, ultimately playing out of position. And it was here, a frequent shift in position, that saw him struggle in the ISL final.

An incomplete circle

Habas has been in two ISL finals as Mohun Bagan coach, in 2020-21 and 2023-24. Having lost the previous to Mumbai City, he had intended to 'complete the circle' in his last phase of coaching this time around.

"That final loss now is past us. We are thinking only about tomorrow. We have to complete the circle. I am satisfied with my team's performance (so far) but I have one more point (to prove) tomorrow. We need to win," Habas had said in the pre-match press conference.

However, success eluded him this time as the Islanders continued to be his Achilles' heel, beating Mohun Bagan 3-1, with goals off Jorge Pereyra Diaz, Bipin Singh and Jakub Vojtus, at the Salt Lake Stadium on May 4.

"Today, we had to defend along the line of the box, something we have not done usually. Merit to the opponents for it. My players fought until the last minute but I think, psychologically, too many matches in the last month might have exhausted them," Habas said.

Mohun Bagan had been playing must-win games in its pursuit of silverware - which was the ISL Shield initially - facing Punjab FC (April 6), Bengaluru FC (April 11), Mumbai City (April 15) and then played Odisha FC in the semifinal over two legs (April 23 and 28).

Additionally, the team missed the services of Albanian striker Armando Sadiku, whom the All India Football Federation gave a disciplinary suspension before the game, as he had made an offensive gesture in the semifinal first leg, after being sent off against Odisha FC.

"I think Armando is more aggressive than Jason (Cummings) or Dimi (Dimitrios Petratos). That allows good possibility (space) for other guys to play. In football, we can't change history," Habas said.

The Spaniard, however, is not ready to end his coaching chapter yet. Mohun Bagan plays in the AFC Asian Champions League 2 next season and Habas hopes to try and complete the circle next season.

"I am talking with the club to continue in the next season. On the previous day, I had said that I wanted to retire as a coach in India. So, I am negotiating with the club to continue for another season," he said.

Mohun Bagan looked gasping for breath with sinking form in the final days of Ferrando's management.

In four months, the club has a Shield in its trophy cabinet and a silver medal from the ISL Trophy final - riding on the experience of Habas, who has found a home in the City of Joy.

I am talking with the club to continue in the next season. On the previous day, I had said that I wanted to retire as a coach in India. So, I am negotiating with the club to continue for another season

HABAS

THE GIST

- Habas started his coaching career with the reserve side of Atletico Madrid in 1990 and within three years, he was assisting Xabier Azkargorta at the Bolivian national team
- In his two spells with La Verde (first as an assistant and then as manager), he took them to the quarterfinals and finals, in 1995 and 1997, respectively
- Habas, though starting with a 4-3-1-2 formation while managing Bolivia, has preferred a three-man defence over the years, with the same trend following at Mohun Bagan this season
- Mohun Bagan scored 26 goals in the first half, including Jason Cummings' strike in the final, the highest among all ISL teams this season

Rain lashes several parts of city; many flights from KIA diverted

India Meteorological Department forecast for the next 36 hours is a partly cloudy sky, light to moderate rain, and thundershowers, very likely towards evening and night

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a gap of two days, rain lashed Bengaluru on Monday evening. Several parts of the city also witnessed hailstorms, and the rain lasted for about an hour.

KIA officials said eight flights were diverted, seven to Chennai and one to Coimbatore. Two were from Delhi, and one each from Mumbai, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Kolhapur, Salem, and Bagdogra. Four were Indigo flights, and one each belonged to Akasa Air, Vistara, Alliance Air, and AirAsia India. Officials said the flights were diverted since they were unable to land between 5 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. Bengaluru Traffic Police said heavy flooding was reported at 33 locations, and tree falls at several places, causing traffic congestion. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the KIA station recorded 3.9 mm rainfall up to 5.30 p.m.

Varuna Mitra, the 24x7 help desk of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, showed that Bengaluru city (BBMP limits) received 13.2 mm rainfall as of 8.15 p.m.

According to Bengaluru Traffic Police, heavy flooding was reported at 33 locations, and tree falls at several places, causing traffic congestion. K. MURALI KUMAR

As of 8.15 p.m., the South Zone received 4.57 mm of rainfall, Bommanahalli Zone 3.33 mm, Mahadevapura Zone 2.47 mm, West Zone 19.22 mm, Dasarahalli 0 mm, Rajarajeshwarinagar 6.2 mm, East Zone 10.5 mm, and Yelahanka Zone 3.45 mm.

The IMD forecast for the next 36 hours is a partly cloudy sky, light to moderate rain, and thundershowers, very likely towards evening and night.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 37 and 24 °C.

Bengaluru city (BBMP limits) received 13.2 mm rainfall as of 8.15 p.m. on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Karnataka registers 99.83% results in ICSE and 99.49% in ISC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Schools in Karnataka registered a pass percentage of 99.83 in the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE class 10) Examination and 99.49% in the Indian School Certificate (ISC- class 12) Examination.

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) declared the results on Monday (May 6).

In Karnataka, 27,779 students – 14,001 (99.73%) boys and 13,778 (99.93%) girls – cleared the ICSE examination. Among 2,352 students, 1,089 (99.18%) boys and 1,263 (99.76%) girls passed in the ISC examination.

Three students from Bengaluru schools scored 99.8% in the ICSE – Adrita Tripathi of Greenwood High, Meher F. Ansil from Bethany High, Sarjapur branch, and Varun. S. from Bishop Cotton Boy's School emerged as the toppers.

In ISC, Mythili Iyer of Greenwood High has got 98.75%. "I am thrilled that my hard work has paid off.

Adrita Tripathi

Mythili Iyer

Varun S.

Meher F. Ansil

I have to thank my teachers and my parents for their support and motivation over the years. What has helped me is the love for the subjects I chose and not the pursuit of a rank or marks," she said.

Meher said in the months before the board exam, she followed what her teachers instructed her to do. "I read the textbooks and solved the worksheets from school. When the board exams approached, I started solving the previous years' questions which gave me an idea about the type of questions that can be asked during the boards. The key is to stay consistent during your studies. Even if you don't study a lot in one day, every day, you must study a little bit and stay consistent," she said.

"I would like to express my gratitude to all the teachers and faculty. My school has given me opportunities to participate in several internal and external forums along with various leadership roles, which has helped me build greater perspectives on various related topics," said Adrita. Varun wants to become a computer scientist and is planning to join IIT. He has already started preparation for the JEE exam. "I try to be focused, in the sense that when I study, I try not to think about anything else other than my coursework. I don't have a particular method as such. I pay attention in class and listen to the tips and advice from my teachers," he said.

HC orders Bitcoin scam accused Shridhar Pujar to appear before SIT on May 8

FROM THE COURT

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka, after hearing three petitions seeking the quashing of two FIRs and a proclamation order, has directed Shridhar K. Pujar (47), a DySP rank police officer accused in the Bitcoin scam, to appear before the investigating officer on May 8 at 9 a.m.

The order, passed on May 2, also said, "In view of the fact that the petitioner has agreed to join the investigation, bail application, if any, to be filed by the petitioner shall not be opposed by the prosecution."

The order said the "investigation officer is at liberty to take the petitioner to judicial custody and conclude the custodial investigation on the very same day before 6 p.m."

The order also said, "On conclusion of the custodial investigation, the petitioner should be let free by taking a bond in the sum of ₹2 lakh with two sureties to the satisfaction of the investigation officer. Further, the petitioner is directed to appear before the investigation officer as and when he was called and should not in any way tamper the prosecution evidence."

The high court, while refusing to quash the two FIRs – one at Vidhana Soudha police station and another in the cybercrime police station of the Criminal Investigation Department – quashed the order of proclamation passed by the I Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court. The State government had formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the Bitcoin scam in July. In the FIR registered in the cybercrime police station, Pujar was accused of keeping the hacker, Srikrishna Ramesh, a.k.a. Sriki and Robin Khandelwala, in illegal custody.

The FIR said the then CCB inspector (narcotics) Shridhar Pujar, who was probing the drug case, kept Sriki (accused number 10 in the case) in illegal custody for three days between November 14, 2020, and November 17, 2020, at a guest house in Central Armed Reserve (CAR) headquarters in Mysuru Road. The FIR also alleged that Pujar kept Sriki's associate Robin Khandelwal (accused number 12 in the case) in illegal custody for four days in the same place between November 14, 2020, and November 18, 2020.

In the FIR registered in the Vidhana Soudha police station, he was accused of attempting to murder and assault a police officer while on duty. He slipped away from the police, and he has been absconding since then. He was later declared a proclaimed offender. The court said it is settled principles of law that generally FIR cannot be quashed unless it has acted prejudicial to the interest of the petitioner and by the allegation found in the complaint, no case is made out against the accused/petitioner. In the case on hand, there is no special reason for this court to quash the FIR itself. Observing this the court quashed the proclamation order.

BBMP contractors complain of payments being stopped after poll code came into force

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has halted the contractor payment process after the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into force on March 16. The BBMP stopped approving new payments for the works completed between 2019-20 and 2022-23. The works were executed under the BBMP grants.

BBMP Special Commissioner (finance), Shivananda Kalakere told *The Hindu*: "We halted the process of issuing fresh approvals for the payments as MCC came into being." He said the payments of earlier approved bills were almost cleared. Mr. Kalakere said he would shortly be inviting the contractors for a meeting to discuss payments and randomisation. It should be noted that contractors have expressed unhappiness over BBMP bringing back randomisation and the TVCC inspection system which was stopped after the Special Investigation Teams (SIT) were formed. Now, as the SITs are dissolved and Justice H.N. Nagamohan Das has expressed helplessness to probe within the stipulated deadline set by the High Court, the BBMP has brought back the randomisation system.

The BBMP Contractors' Association president, K.T. Manjunath alleged that the civic body has not cleared approved bills for over a month now. "The MCC will not apply for clearing the bills which were already approved. The BBMP had told contractors that bills were approved," he alleged.

Mr. Manjunath further alleged that BBMP received oral instructions from the government to freeze payments during elections. "The contractors are facing harassment fromBBMP and this has to stop. On the other hand, there was no requirement for reintroducing randomisation and TVCC as the defect and liability period has ended for the completed work. What is point of inspection again to clear bills?," he asked.

Man dies after power pole falls on him

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 50-year old man died on Monday after an electric pole fell on him, near Dobspet, around 4.30 p.m. The deceased was identified as Siddagangaiah, a daily wage worker from Maraluvadi village and a father of three children.

According to Dobspet police, Mr. Siddagangaiah was watching the installation poles for the Energy Department's Nirantara Jyothi scheme when the accident occurred.

"When the last pole was being installed, it fell on him, and he died on the spot," a police official further said.

Meanwhile, the officials of Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) clarified that it was a non-departmental accident.

"The accident occurred in the Dobspet subdivision. It was the mistake of the contractor who was transporting the electric poles. The poles were being carried on a digger, which was attached to a tractor. Due to some technical problem, the pole fell on the person, and he died," a source at Bescom said.

CLAT 2025 to be held on December 1

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Common Law Admissions Test (CLAT) 2025, for admissions at National Law Universities, will be conducted on December 1, Sunday, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., the Consortium of National Law Universities announced on Monday. The decision was made after a meeting of the executive committee and the Governing Body of the Consortium, according to a press release.

"Details regarding syllabus for the examination, application and counselling process shall be released shortly," the release said.

Ambulance staff threaten to strike work

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Upset over the delay in payment of salaries and rollback of the 45% increment sanctioned during the previous government's tenure, without a GO, employees of the 108 Arogya Kavacha service have threatened to strike work from Tuesday.

Around 715 ambulances and approximately 3,500 employees across Karnataka are associated with the 108 ambulance associations' service.

In August 2022, the then government revised the salaries of the staff as per applicable minimum wages and also awarded an increment of 45%. However, the instructions to the service provider - GVK-EMRI, which is running the service for the State government - were issued orally, and a Government Order regarding the same was not issued.

Taking note of this, the Health Department, which has been releasing ₹162.40 crore annually to the service provider as per the MoU (₹40.60 crore every trimester), questioned GVK-EMRI about the additional payment without a written authorisation and asked them to recover the excess amount paid to the employees. Amidst this confusion, the salaries of the employees have been withheld since December.

"The service provider released salaries for December and January recently but what we have got is less than half of what we were getting monthly. The company is now recovering the 45% increment that was given to us till November 2023. Moreover, they have classified the wages on a zonal basis, which is further affecting our wages," said Srishail Halloor, president of the Karnataka State 108 Arogya Kavacha Employees' Association. He said a driver who was drawing ₹31,000 will now get only ₹ 13,000.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao alleged that the mess was created during the previous government's tenure. He said the department has been releasing the annual grants to the service provider as per the MoU. State Health Commissioner Randeep D. said, "We have already issued a notice under the Essential Services Maintenance Act to GVK-EMRI so that 108 emergency ambulance services are not disrupted."

He said he will meet the employees on Tuesday to hear them out and discuss their issues.

LOST OF DOCUMENTS

My client, M.Shobha W/o.M. Manohara, # 19, 17th Cross Road, 4th Block, Peenya 1st Phase, Bangalore 560 058. Phone : 9980623026 at The Property Identity No. (P.I.D.) which is the deed of purchase to Late Chandrayya. P.I.D. No. 1-83-25 MUNICIPAL NO. 25, property number 143, dated : 10-02-1978 in the office of the sub-registrar, Bangalore North Taluk, registered in book 1, volume 3063, pages 176 to 176, and registered as number 3076/1977/78, the deed has been lost.

M.Krishnamurthy Advocate LLB
Mobile 9845114736

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that our client **Mrs. Shwetha. K. R., W/o Mr. Vishwanath.P and Mr. Vishwanath. P., S/o Mr. V. Pillaraj,** are the absolute owner of the Schedule Property mentioned hereunder via **Sale Deed dated 19/03/2019,** registered as document bearing No. **KCH-1-6309-2018-19,** executed by, Mr. Hanumantha Reddy S/o Late Munireddy, rep by his GPA Holder Mrs. Arasamma W/o Mr. Pillaraj.

Our client are desirous of dealing with the Schedule Property by way of Mortgage to Anand Rathi Global Finance Ltd.,. Any person/s entitles having any claim, right, title or interest over the schedule properties or any part thereof in any manner objecting Mortgage to Anand Rathi Global Finance Ltd., or the ownership of our client over the Schedule Property may lodge their claim with documentary proof with the undersigned **within 7 days** from the date of this public notice and any claim or objection received thereafter will not be binding over the aforesaid properties.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of an Residential Immovable Property presently comes under the limit of **B.B.M.P, Ward No. 24, Property bearing No. 14,** situated at 7th "A" Main, Kacharakanahalli, (HBR Layout 3rd Block, 1st Stage), Bangalore 560043, previously it was Site No. 14, Khata No. 222/14, situated at Kacharakanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore and bounded on:

East by : Jai Ganesh's Property (Previously Road), West by : M. G. Shetty's Property (Previously David's Property), North by : Private Property (Previously remaining portion of the same property), South by : Road (Previously M. G. Shetty's House).

In measuring East to West: 30 Feet, North to South 40 Feet, in all measuring 1200 Square Feet.

Vinod. R.,
ADVOCATE,
STERLING LAW PARTNERS,
#No. 1656, Balaji Nilayam, 1st Cross, Mariyappanpalya, Rajajinagar, Bangalore 560021 Call :7411531524
Place: Bengaluru Date: 06/05/2024

THE HINDU GROUP
THE HINDU
THE INFORMED VOTER
QUIZ

1. What is the approximate economic lifespan of an EVM?
2. In what form should a voter apply for the correction of entries in his/her EPIC?
3. What fee is required for issuing a replacement EPIC to an elector, along with a copy of the complaint lodged with the police reporting the loss?

Visit forms.thehindu.co.in/informed_voter/terms.html
Read the Terms & Conditions.

Scan the code, take the pledge, participate in the quiz and win exciting gift vouchers

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Population of the State
2. 16 candidates including NOTA
3. 3

A mouth bacteria has starring role in colorectal cancer: study

According to a research team's experiments, some genetic factors could be boosting the ability of *Fusobacterium nucleatum* bacteria to associate with cancers of the gut. The team also showed that when mice were infected with this type of *Fusobacterium*, their intestines developed adenomas

Sayantan Datta

The bacteria known as *Fusobacterium nucleatum* live in the human mouth and are rarely found elsewhere. But in cases of cancer of the colon or the rectum, the bacteria are found in tumours in the gut, where they help cancer cells escape from the immune system and spread to other parts of the body.

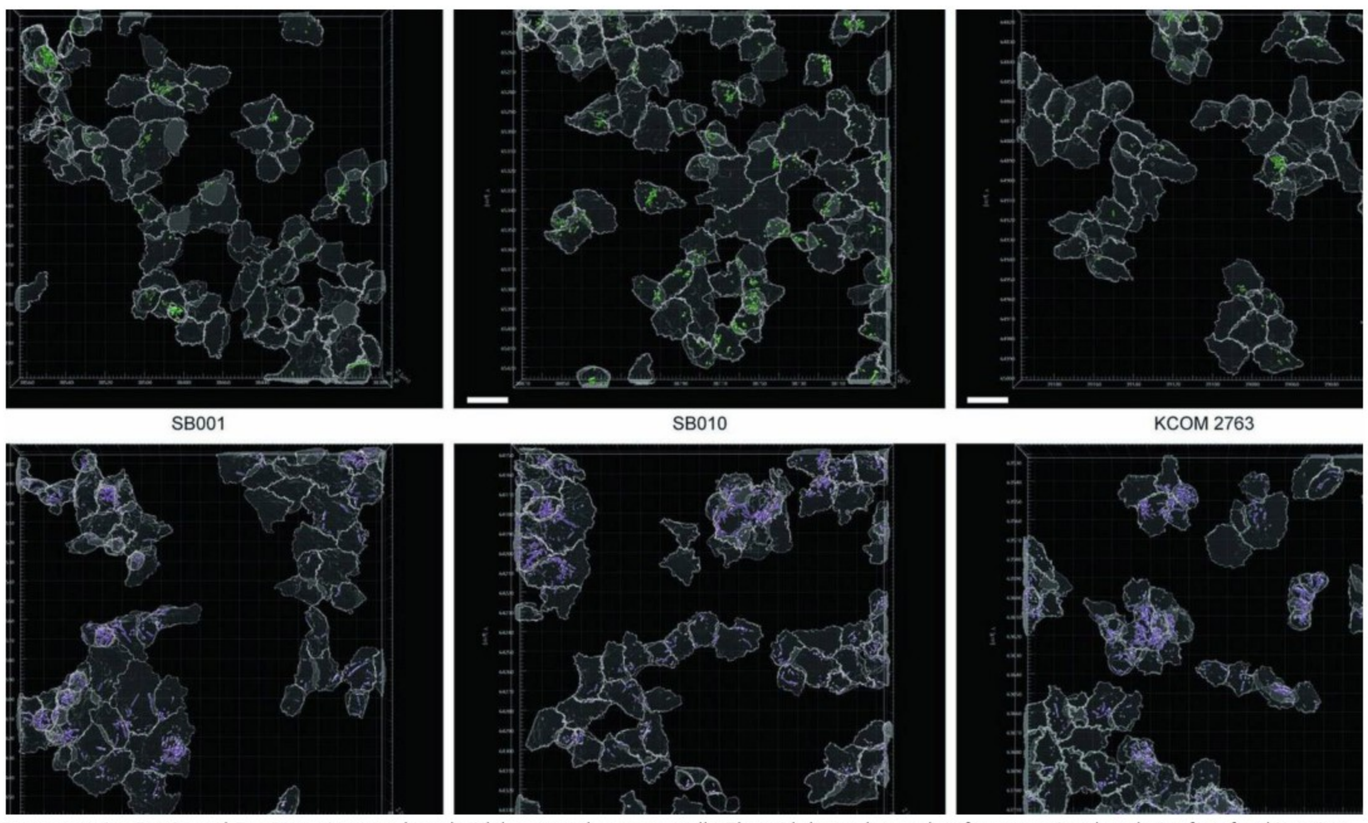
In a new study, a group of researchers from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in the U.S. has identified a distinct subtype of the bacterium that's found in relatively greater quantities in colorectal cancer (CRC) tumours.

CRC is the seventh most common type of cancer in India, where the number of cases rose by 20% from 2004 to 2014. Worldwide, the overall CRC incidence has declined but, experts wrote in the journal *Science* last year, the incidence of age-adjusted early-onset CRC "has risen at an alarming rate of 2-4% in many countries, with even sharper increases in individuals younger than 30 years."

According to the team's experiments, described in a paper in *Nature* in March, some genetic factors could be boosting *Fusobacterium's* ability to associate with cancers of the gut.

\The team also showed that when mice were infected with this type of *Fusobacterium*, their intestines developed precancerous formations called adenomas.

Experts said the study's findings could be used in future to develop tests to detect CRC early and develop targeted treatment options.



Representative *Fna* C1 and *Fna* C2 strains co-cultured with human colon cancer cells. The grid shows the results of computational analysis of confocal imaging. Independent masks for cancer epithelial cells (grey), and intracellular bacterial cells (*Fna* C1 green, *Fna* C2 lavender) were generated. The masks were used to calculate the percent of cancer cells with intracellular *Fna*. The scale bar is 20µm. ZEPEDA-RIVERA, M., MINOT, S.S., BOUZEK, H. ET AL.

A clade of its own

The researchers began by culturing *Fusobacterium* bacteria collected from 130 human CRC tumours in the laboratory.

Then they mapped the entire genetic composition of the isolated bacteria and found that out of the four known *Fusobacterium nucleatum* subspecies, only *Fusobacterium nucleatum animalis* (*Fna*) was significantly associated with CRC tumours.

Individual members of the same species have slightly different DNA. Pangenomic analysis helps researchers map all the genes in a species as well as those parts of the genome that some but not all members of the species have.

This part is called the accessory genome. The members of a species can be further subclassified depending on the accessory genomes they have.

In their analysis, the researchers found *Fna* has the smallest core genome (the part that all members of the species have), indicating there could be different subtypes of *Fna*.

In response, they traced the evolutionary history of the bacteria by tracing the changes in its genes. This analysis revealed that *Fna*, instead of being one homogenous group, is composed of bacteria from two different evolutionary lineages.

Scientists call a group of life-forms belonging to one evolutionary lineage a clade. Thus, the researchers had identified two different clades of *Fna*: they called these *Fna* C1 and *Fna* C2.

They further found *Fna* C2 bacteria are significantly associated with CRC tumours and that they have extra genetic factors to help them in this regard.

Colonising the gut

Both physical and genetic differences between the two clades seemed to contribute to *Fna* C2 bacteria's ability to associate with CRC tumours. Physically, the *Fna* C2 bacteria looked longer and thinner than *Fna* C1 bacteria. Such differences can affect how bacteria are able to live in host tissue as well as evade the body's immune system, the authors wrote in their paper.

Genetically, *Fna* C2 bacteria had genes required to munch two compounds for energy in the human gut: ethanolamine and 1,2-propanediol. These genes were missing in *Fna* C1. So the researchers concluded *Fna* C2 bacteria's ability to associate with CRC tumours was at least partly contingent on them "having increased nutrient scavenging mechanisms and enhanced metabolic potential".

The researchers validated their findings by analysing genomes present in more than 1,200 human stool samples, roughly half of which were from people with CRC while others were from healthy individuals. They found that the *Fna* genes required to metabolise ethanolamine and 1,2-propanediol were more enriched in stool samples from CRC patients than in samples from people without CRC.

Mouth to gut

Scientists previously believed *Fusobacterium* bacteria could go from the mouth to the gut by infecting the bloodstream when, say, someone brushed their gums too hard or during routine dental procedures. The authors of the new *Nature* paper pitched a new route: that the bacteria could have descended through the gastrointestinal tract to reach the colon.

Bacteria don't usually take this path because they can't survive the highly acidic environment of the stomach.

> Across the world, overall CRC incidence has declined but the incidence of age-adjusted early-onset CRC has risen at an alarming rate of 2-4%

But the researchers found *Fna* C2 could. These bacteria could grow in more acidic conditions than could *Fna* C1 bacteria – and they also had specific genes that could resist the effects of acids. These genes came online when the acidity was comparable to that of stomach acid.

In mice as in humans

Next, the researchers investigated whether *Fna* C2 could induce the development of tumours in the gut. For this, they introduced *Fna* C1 bacteria in the inflamed guts of some mice and *Fna* C2 bacteria in the inflamed guts of others. (These mice are a common animal model used to investigate conditions that also affect humans.) They found a significantly higher incidence of adenomas in the intestines the mice treated with *Fna* C2 bacteria.

They also noted that the intestines of *Fna* C2-treated mice had different metabolic profiles – changes consistent with previously reported associations between differential metabolite levels and tumour progression.

"Overall, our results demonstrate the ability of *Fna* C2, but not *Fna* C1, to metabolically affect the intestinal milieu towards" conditions conducive to CRC, the authors wrote.

Finally, the researchers tested their hypotheses in a cohort of human patients. Working with CRC tissue and non-cancerous tissues from the same individual, the authors confirmed that *Fna* C2 was the only *Fusobacterium* subtype enriched in CRC tissues. They found similar results in stool samples from those with CRC but not in those from healthy individuals.

Long road to clinical trials

According to Neetu Kalra, a cancer therapeutics researcher at Azim Premji University, Bhopal, "The study presents promising prospects for the advancements of microbial cellular therapies, which involve the use of modified bacterial strains to directly administer treatments into tumours."

Varun Aggarwala is an assistant professor at Jio Institute, Mumbai, who also works on faecal transplants for infectious and inflammatory bowel diseases. He called the study "comprehensive" and said "studies like this provide a solid foundation for the broader community to design targeted microbial interventions and diagnostics for CRC."

He added that future research should track the gut and oral microbiome of high-risk individuals and their tumour microbiome after a CRC diagnosis to understand how certain strains of bacteria can cause cancer.

Similarly, Dr. Kalra said studies to come could look at the "colonisation timeline" of *Fna* C2 bacteria: the CRC stage at which the bacteria become associated with the tumours. "If colonisation occurs early," she explained, "it could facilitate early CRC diagnosis".

On the flip side, she also said developing a drug that could selectively target *Fna* C2 bacteria without affecting *Fna* C1 or other gut bacteria "presents a significant challenge".

(Sayantan Datta is a science journalist and a faculty member at Krea University. Dutta tweets at @queersprings.)

A male Sumatran orangutan named Rakus is seen two months after self-treating a wound with a medicinal plant in the Suaq Balimbing research site, August 25, 2022. REUTERS

Orangutan used plant to treat wound, scientists say

Associated Press

An orangutan appeared to treat a wound with medicine from a tropical plant– the latest example of how some animals attempt to soothe their own ills with remedies found in the wild, scientists reported Thursday.

Scientists observed Rakus pluck and chew up leaves of a medicinal plant used by people throughout Southeast Asia to treat pain and inflammation. The adult male orangutan then used his fingers to apply the plant juices to an injury on the right cheek. Afterward, he pressed the chewed plant to cover the open wound like a makeshift bandage, according to a new study in *Scientific Reports*.

Previous research has documented several species of great apes foraging for medicines in forests to heal themselves, but scientists hadn't yet seen an animal treat itself in this way.

"This is the first time that we have observed a wild animal applying a quite potent medicinal plant directly to a wound," said co-author Isabelle Laumer, a biologist at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior in Konstanz, Germany.

The orangutan's intriguing behaviour was recorded in 2022 by Ulil Azhari, a co-author and field researcher at the Suaq Project in Medan, Indonesia. Photographs show the animal's wound closed within a month without any problems.

Scientists have been observing orangutans in Indonesia's Gunung Leuser

Rakus the orangutan plucked and chewed up leaves of a medicinal plant used by people throughout Southeast Asia. The orangutan then used his fingers to apply the juices to a wound on his cheek.

National Park since 1994, but they hadn't previously seen this behaviour.

"It's a single observation," said Emory University biologist Jacobus de Roode, who was not involved in the study. "But often we learn about new behaviours by starting with a single observation."

"Very likely it's self-medication," said de Roode, adding that the orangutan applied the plant only to the wound and no other body part.

It's possible Rakus learned the technique from other orangutans living outside the park and away from scientists' daily scrutiny, said co-author Caroline Schuppli at Max Planck.

Rakus was born and lived as a juvenile outside the study area. Researchers believe the orangutan got hurt in a fight with another animal. It's not known whether Rakus earlier treated other injuries.

Scientists have previously recorded other primates using plants to treat themselves.

Bornean orangutans rubbed themselves with juices from a medicinal plant, possibly to reduce body pains or chase away parasites.

Chimpanzees in multiple locations have been observed chewing on the shoots of bitter-tasting plants to soothe their stomachs. Gorillas, chimpanzees and bonobos swallow certain rough leaves whole to get rid of stomach parasites.

"If this behavior exists in some of our closest living relatives, what could that tell us about how medicine first evolved?" said Tara Stoinski, president and chief scientific officer of the nonprofit Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, who had no role in the study.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Celestial gatherings of stars

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

The Spring Triangle is an asterism — a pattern of stars observed in the sky, even if the stars themselves may be at different distances — composed of the stars Arcturus, X, and Spica. X is the brightest star in the constellation of Leo and, together with five other stars, makes up another asterism called the Sickle. There is also a character in the 'Harry Potter' franchise named X. Name X.

QUESTION 2

Arcturus and Spica are part of another asterism, called Y, together with the stars Denebola and Cor Caroli. Y's southernmost stars make up the Spring Triangle. Another asterism lies within Y, called Coma Berenices: it's notable for containing some galaxies that observers can spot with an amateur telescope. Name Y.

QUESTION 3

The _____ Triangle is an asterism made of the brightest stars of the Aquila, Cygnus, and Lyra constellations. Before the development of modern navigation systems, pilots of the U.S. Air Force used to call it the "navigator's triangle". Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 4

The _____ Triangle is an asterism composed of the three primary stars of the Canis Major, Orion, and Canis Minor constellations. Because these stars are so bright, people on the ground can use this asterism like a signpost for the night sky. Fill in the blank.

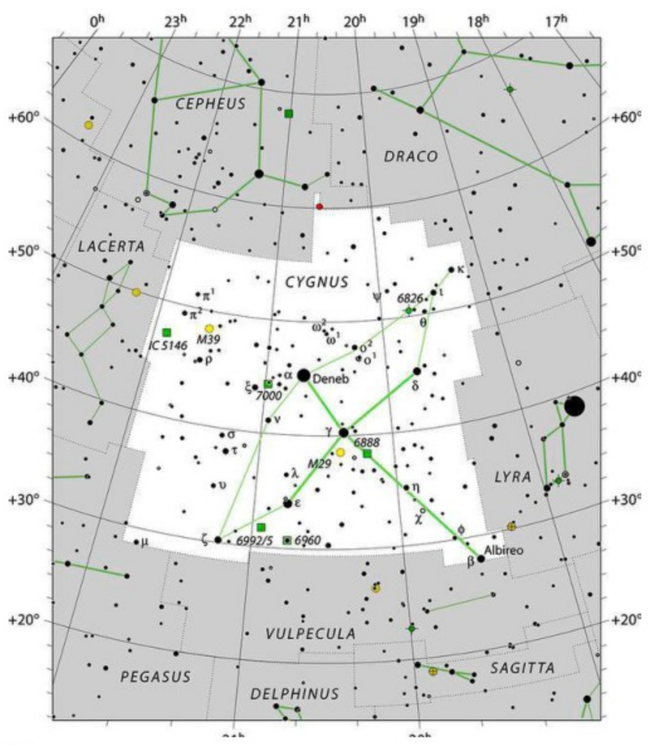
QUESTION 5

Name the country whose national flag depicts stars mentioned in Q1, Q2, and Q4.

Answers to May 3 quiz:

1. Female mosquito whose bite transmits malaria, doctor who discovered it – **Ans:** *Anopheles stephensi*, **Ronald Ross**
2. Country that contributes to more than half of malaria cases in WHO's Southeast Asia region – **Ans: India**
3. Cheapest antimalarial drug to which mosquitoes have become resistant – **Ans: Chloroquine**
4. Country that launched the world's first malaria vaccine – **Ans: Cameroon, RTS,S vaccine**
5. Vaccine manufacturer with production capacity for second malaria vaccine – **Ans: Serum Institute of India**

Visual: **Paul Hermann Müller**
First Contact: K.N. Viswanathan | ViswanadhaRao Batchu | Mihika Kushwaha | Nithin Sunny



Visual: Name the asterism depicted in bold green. ROGER SINNOTT & RICK FIENBERG

SIT grills Revanna; ex-Minister moves bail plea

Former PM Deve Gowda and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy moved court and the Principal City Civil and Sessions Judge has issued an injunction order against 89 media outlets

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Sleuths from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) are grilling former Minister H.D. Revanna, who was arrested in an alleged case of abduction of a woman and remanded in police custody till May 8.

Sources said that Mr. Revanna had been denying allegations against him and was not cooperating with investigators. The SIT has also secured the custody of the second accused in the case, Satish Babu, who allegedly forcibly took away the victim of alleged sexual abuse by Prajwal Revanna, Hassan MP and son of Mr. Revanna, from her house in K.R. Nagar. She was allegedly abducted to prevent her from testifying against the MP.

H.D. Revanna FILE PHOTO

Interrogation

The sources said the police now have the custody of both the accused in the case and would interrogate them separately and later together. Satish Babu had claimed to the victim's family that Mr. Revanna had instructed him to get her.

Mr. Revanna moved a bail plea in the abduction case on Monday. He was arrested in the case after his anticipatory bail plea was turned down by the court on Saturday. "He has moved a bail plea today, but we were not given prior notice and we were not present in the court.

The court has also not set a date for its hearing yet," a senior official said.

HDD, HDK get injunction

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy moved court and the Principal City Civil and Sessions Judge has issued an injunction order against 89 media outlets, temporarily restraining them "from publishing any news item by falsely depicting the plaintiffs, by showing their morphed photos, without any substantive evidence against them, with an intention to unnecessarily tarnishing their image and reputation in the public at large".

However, the order clarifies that "the defendants are not totally restrained from publishing, telecasting any news, if they think that, truth is their defence, and they have substantial piece of evidence to defend themselves". The next date of hearing in the case is on May 29.

Prajwal misused official residence allotted to former Prime Minister

Sathish G.T.
SHIVAMOGGA

Prajwal Revanna, MP, who is facing sexual abuse charges, allegedly misused the official residence allotted to former Prime Minister and Rajya Sabha member H.D. Deve Gowda in Hassan for his criminal acts.

In a complaint filed against the Janata Dal (S) leader on May 1, a woman alleged that she was raped at his official residence on R.C. Road in Hassan. The residence is located next to the office of the Superintendent of Police, Hassan.

The building has been referred to as "MP's quarters" by office-bearers of the JD(S). However, this was allotted to the former Prime Minister on his request, when he was representing Hassan in the Lok Sabha.

When *The Hindu* contacted Hassan Deputy Commissioner C. Sathyabhama, the official after verifying the files from the Public Works Department (PWD), said that the structure was constructed by the government and was allotted to "former PM and Lok Sabha member" on March 7, 2018. It remained with him. "There has been no fresh order allotting the structure to the current MP, Prajwal Revanna," she added.

A view of the official residence allotted to former PM H.D. Deve Gowda in Hassan. PRAKASH HASSAN

Gowda's request

Earlier, Mr. Gowda, during his visit to Hassan, would stay at his relative, Kale Gowda's, place. He had requested the district administration for a suitable accommodation in the city, as he wished to spend more time in Hassan.

The administration chose the PWD quarters, next to the office of Hassan Superintendent of Police, on R.C. Road. By then, the PWD had demolished the old structure, and planned to construct an officer's quarters. In 2017, the PWD officers were told to allot the same to Mr. Gowda and upgrade the design to suit the requirements of the former Prime Minister.

Interestingly, it is said, the design was finalised by Mr. Deve Gowda's son H.D. Revanna, on the advice of a 'vaastu' expert. A few parts of the structure were removed to suit the revised design.

After the building was ready, Mr. Gowda used to stay there during his visits to Hassan. He contested for Lok Sabha from Tumakuru in 2019 and lost. A year later, in June 2020, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Prajwal Revanna, who was elected to the Lok Sabha on the JD(S) ticket in 2019, stayed at the two-storeyed building regularly. He often met party workers there. Former Minister Mr. Revanna regularly met the press in the office.

The woman, in her complaint, said that in 2021, she visited the 'MP's office and quarters' with regard to admission of girls to a hostel. The accused, Mr. Prajwal Revanna, locked her up in a room and raped her. He allegedly threatened her that he would kill her husband with the gun he possessed if she did not cooperate with him. The Lok Sabha member recorded his act on his mobile phone.

Following the complaint, the Special Investigation Team, probing into the complaints against Mr. Prajwal Revanna, conducted the mahazar at the official residence on Saturday.

Devaraje Gowda says CBI should probe case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Accusing Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Congress government of having a hand in the distribution of pen drives containing explicit contents of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is accused of sexually assaulting women, BJP leader Devaraje Gowda on Monday said that the case has to be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

However, Mr. Shivakumar termed the allegations as "lies and baseless", and that he was not connected with the release of pen drive.

Devaraje Gowda, who was the party's candidate for the Holenarasipur Assembly seat against Prajwal's father H.D. Revanna in the May 2023 assembly elections, had earlier claimed that he had written a letter to Vijayendra in December, 2023, claiming he was aware of Prajwal's deeds and had informed the BJP leaders.

Mr. Devaraje Gowda on Monday said, "The SIT investigation is not transparent. Victims are being bought and the real accused are being hidden. We will also approach the court seeking a CBI inquiry and we have enough documents to present before the court... This is a conspiracy to defame the Prime Minister Narendra Modi nationally because Janata Dal (Secular) is in alliance with BJP."

Accusing the former Mandya MP and BJP leader L.R. Shivarame Gowda of acting as a mediator, he said: "He met me 10 times and that too in star hotels. He asked me not to embarrass the government or implicate Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar." He also claimed that the negotiations happened till 5 p.m. on Sunday, and that he was being pressurised to remove Mr. Shivakumar's name from his statement made before the SIT.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister said that he had nothing to do with the distribution of pen drive. "Mr. Devaraje Gowda is a BJP leader and that is why he is trying to do damage control because the incident has embarrassed the BJP. He, in the past, had announced that he would release the pen drive contents after seeking permission from his party leaders.

When such is the case, how am I connected?" he said in a statement. He accused BJP and JD (S) behind the conspiracy.

Passengers complain about non-availability of KSRTC buses ahead of elections

Pranathi Nandula
Adithi A.
BENGALURU

The rainfall in the evening and the overcrowded buses made travelling to hometowns from Bengaluru uncomfortable for people ahead of the elections in the State, on Monday.

Thousands of passengers were at the Majestic and Yeshwantpur bus stands trying to secure tickets for private or Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation buses.

More buses needed

Prema, a resident of Yelahanka, was among the many waiting at Majestic to travel to Kalaburagi. She voiced her disappointment, saying, "Finding a bus to return home and vote has been a struggle. The frequency of buses has not been increased to meet the demand. Political leaders urge us to vote, but the government's efforts to facilitate our travel during elections are lacking. We need more buses to ensure we can exercise our right to vote."

KSRTC officials acknowledged that there was a shortage of buses

Amaresh M., who was travelling with his wife and three children to Raichur, had similar complaints. "There is not a single bus to take my family home. I could not reserve seats either. There are simply not enough buses to handle the rush," he said.

Buses for election

KSRTC officials acknowledged that there was a shortage of buses. "We have sent 6,000 buses for election. But both on Sunday and Monday, our officials were at bus stands and ensured that there were buses, even if there was a slight delay," said V. Anbu Kumar, Managing Director of KSRTC.

Many commuters said they faced difficulties while booking tickets. Mushtaq Ahmed, a resident of Bannerghatta Road, who was travelling to Davangere from Yeshwanthpur, said, "I have been trying to book a ticket from 10, but I could not get it. There was a long waiting list for Sunday and Monday due to the election rush. Somehow, my ticket was finally confirmed on Monday afternoon."

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, MAY. 07	
RISE 05:57	SET 18:36
RISE 05:00	SET 17:55
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 08	
RISE 05:56	SET 18:36
RISE 05:48	SET 18:56
THURSDAY, MAY. 09	
RISE 05:56	SET 18:36
RISE 06:40	SET 19:59

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	38	28
Mysuru	37	24
Bengaluru	37	24

Bengaluru Today
37°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be very warm and uneasy. Chances of light rain and thundershower at few places. A comfortable night .

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C Weather will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable Chances of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds.

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THE HINDU
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Research lab at Christ varsity inaugurated

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A state-of-the-art Advanced Materials Research Innovation and Technology Lab was inaugurated in Christ (Deemed to be University) by the Consul General of Italy for Bengaluru, Alfonso Tagliaferri.

The research lab, equipped with the latest technologies and research facilities, is set to catalyse research efforts in various fields, including nanotechnology, biomaterials, renewable energy materials, environmental remediation, carbon capture utilisation and storage, and advanced manufacturing, said a release. The Consul General of Italy highlighted the significance of collaboration between educational institutions, research organisations, and industries from India and Italy.

FIR filed in KIA hoax bomb threat email

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) police have registered an FIR against an unknown person for sending a threat mail to bomb the airport on April 29. Geetha Rani, terminal manager, in her complaint, said the mail was sent to the airport's feedback email ID claiming that bombs had been planted and that they would explode in a few hours. The mailer claimed to be from a terrorist group.

An elaborate security check was launched before it was concluded to be a hoax. The complainant also shared the IP address of the sender.

Smoking on flight

Meanwhile, the airport police on Sunday arrested a 31-year-old passenger for

An elaborate security check was launched before it was concluded to be a hoax

allegedly smoking on board a Dubai to Bengaluru bound flight. Based on a complaint filed by Punith B.M., manager of security, airport operations, and customer service, the police arrested Mohammed Aslam Halaipotra Najir from Porbandar in Gujarat, charging him under different sections of the IPC.

While smoking, he was noticed by the captain and crew members. He was detained by security as soon as the flight landed and was handed over to the police. The police are now probing how he sourced the banned items, hoodwinking the security checks.

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The number of people being evacuated from east Rafah

1 in lakh. The Israeli army said that it was evacuating people from eastern Rafah ahead of an expected ground assault in the southern city of Gaza. According to the WHO about 1.2 million are sheltering in Rafah, after having fled from elsewhere in Gaza. AFP

Singapore Airlines buys sustainable fuel from Neste

1,000 in tonnes. Finland-based Neste will blend Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), made from 100% renewable waste and residue raw materials, with conventional fuel and deliver it to Changi Airport. REUTERS

The sugar needed for exports, as per industry body ISMA

20 in lakh tonnes. Sugar industry body ISMA urged the government to allow sugar exports to enable them to make cane payments to farmers on time. The government has not allowed sugar exports to boost domestic supply. PTI

Election Commission directs parties to remove fake content

3 hours. The EC directed political parties to remove fake content from their social media platforms within three hours of such content being brought to their notice. The EC also warned against the misuse of artificial intelligence-based tools to create deepfakes. PTI

The number of people killed in Brazil due to heavy rains

83 Brazil's southernmost state Rio Grande do Sul saw at least 83 people killed due to heavy rains. Civil defence authorities have reported 111 people missing, and at least 1,22,000 displaced. REUTERS

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What is carbon farming?

What are some techniques within carbon farming which can reduce greenhouse gas emissions? What are the challenges in implementing such techniques, especially in developing countries such as India? What are some of the global initiatives?

EXPLAINER

Vinaya Kumar H.M.

Carbon is found in all living organisms and many minerals. It is fundamental to life on earth and plays a crucial role in various processes, including photosynthesis, respiration, and the carbon cycle. Farming is the practice of cultivating land, raising crops, and/or livestock for food, fibre, fuel, or other resources. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from planting and harvesting crops to managing livestock and maintaining agricultural infrastructure.

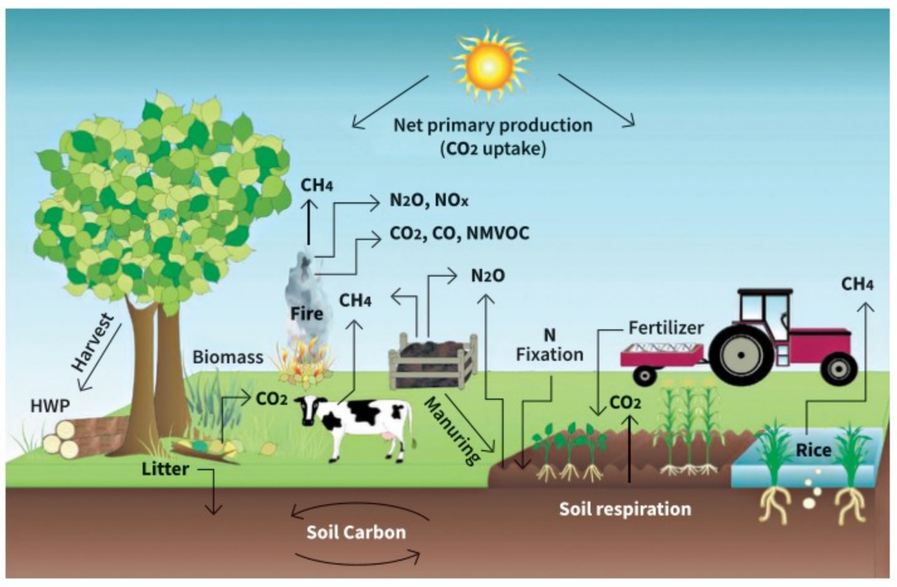
Carbon farming combines these two concepts by implementing regenerative agricultural practices that restore ecosystem health while improving agricultural productivity and soil health, and mitigating climate change by enhancing carbon storage in agricultural landscapes and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The practice is easy to adopt across various agro-climatic zones. It can also help ameliorate soil degradation, water scarcity, and challenges related to climate variability.

New ways of farming: A worker loads fertilizer into a tank attached to a large drone, preparing to spray it over the rice fields in the Long An province in southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta, on January 23. AP

THE GIST

- Implementing regenerative agricultural practices that restore ecosystem health while improving agricultural productivity and soil health, and mitigating climate change by enhancing carbon storage in agricultural landscapes and reducing greenhouse gas emissions is carbon farming.
- Regions with extensive agricultural land, such as the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Deccan Plateau, are well suited to adopt carbon farming whereas the mountainous terrain of the Himalayan region is less so.
- In recent years, the practice of carbon trading in the agriculture sector has become important around the world, but especially in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

The process of emitting and removing greenhouse gas emissions in managed farmland



Source: 'Carbon farming – Making agriculture fit for 2030', a study for the European Parliament's committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

How can carbon farming help?

A simple implementation of carbon farming is rotational grazing. Others include agroforestry, conservation agriculture, integrated nutrient management, agro-ecology, livestock management, and land restoration.

Agroforestry practices – including silvopasture and alley cropping – can further diversify farm income by sequestering carbon in trees and shrubs. Conservation agriculture techniques such as zero tillage, crop rotation, cover cropping, and crop residue management (stubble retention and composting) can help minimise soil disturbance and enhance organic content, particularly in places with other intense agricultural activities.

Integrated nutrient management practices promote soil fertility and reduce emissions by using organic fertilizers and compost. Agro-ecological approaches such as crop diversification and intercropping have benefits for ecosystem resilience. Livestock management strategies including rotational grazing, optimising feed quality, and managing animal waste can reduce methane emissions and increase the amount of carbon stored away in pasture lands.

What are the challenges to carbon farming?

While carbon farming does offer numerous benefits, its effectiveness varies depending on multiple factors – geographical location, soil type, crop selection, water availability, biodiversity, and farm size and scale. Its usefulness also depends on land management practices, sufficient policy support, and community engagement.

Regions with long growing seasons, sufficient rainfall, and substantial irrigation are best suited to practise carbon farming because they provide the best conditions in which to sequester carbon, through vegetation growth. In regions with adequate rainfall and fertile soil, the potential for carbon sequestration through practices like agroforestry (integrating trees and shrubs with crops) and conservation agriculture (minimising soil disturbance) may be particularly high.

On the other hand, carbon farming can be challenging in hot and dry areas where the availability of water is limited, and prioritised for drinking and washing needs. Limited water availability can hinder the growth of plants, thus restricting the potential for sequestration through photosynthesis. For example, practices like cover cropping, which require additional vegetation between main crop cycles, may not be viable due to the added water demand. Moreover, selecting which plants to grow also becomes crucial because not all species trap and store carbon in the same amounts or in an equally effectively manner. Fast-growing trees and deep-rooted perennial grasses tend to be better at this task – but on the flip side, these types of plants may not be well-suited to arid environments.

Further, the adoption of carbon farming practices may require financial assistance for farmers to overcome the costs of implementing them. In the context of developing countries like India, small-scale farmers may lack the resources to invest in sustainable land management practices and environmental services. In sum, while carbon farming holds promise as a mitigation strategy, addressing these challenges is essential to realise its full potential in combating climate change.

What are some carbon farming schemes worldwide?

In recent years, the practice of carbon trading in the agriculture sector has become important around the world, but especially in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, where voluntary carbon markets have emerged. Initiatives like the Chicago Climate Exchange and the Carbon Farming Initiative in Australia demonstrate efforts to incentivise carbon mitigation activities in agriculture. The processes range from no-till farming (growing crops without disturbing the soil) to reforestation and pollution reduction.

Initiatives like Kenya's Agricultural Carbon Project, which has the World Bank's support, also highlight the potential for carbon farming to address climate mitigation and adaptation and food security challenges in economically developing countries.

The launch of the '4 per 1000' initiative during the COP21 climate talks in 2015 in Paris highlights the particular role of sinks in mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions. As the oceans and the atmosphere are filled with carbon, and they approach their saturation points, we must manage the remaining carbon budget of 390 billion tonnes or so wisely.

What are the opportunities in India?

As climate change intensifies, climate-resilient and emission-reducing agricultural practices can benefit from adaptation strategies. Agriculture is crucial in this endeavour.

Grassroots initiatives and pioneering agrarian research in India are demonstrating the viability of organic farming to sequester carbon. In this regard, agro-ecological practices in India could yield significant economic benefits, with the potential to generate $63 billion in value from approximately 170 million hectares of arable land. This estimate includes an annual payment of around ₹5,000-6,000 per acre for farmers to provide climate services by adopting sustainable agricultural practices.

Regions with extensive agricultural land, such as the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Deccan Plateau, are well suited to adopt carbon farming whereas the mountainous terrain of the Himalayan region is less so. Coastal areas are prone to salinisation and have limited access to resources, thus limited the adoption of traditional farming practices.

Further, carbon credit systems can incentivise farmers by providing additional income through environmental services. Studies have shown agricultural soils can absorb 3-8 billion tonnes of CO2-equivalent every year over 20-30 years. This capacity can bridge the gap between feasible emissions reductions and the indispensable stabilisation of the climate. So carbon farming could also be a sustainable strategy to mitigate climate change and enhance food security in India.

But scaling it up requires concerted efforts to address several challenges, including limited awareness, inadequate policy support, technological barriers, and an enabling adoption environment. Yet promoting carbon farming is in India's interests – to mitigate climate change while improving soil health, enhancing biodiversity, and creating economic opportunities for its adopters.

Vinaya Kumar H.M. is an assistant professor of the Agricultural Extension, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga.

Poll seizures cross ₹450 crore

The Election Commission has made total seizures worth over ₹450.98 crore since March 16 when the model code of conduct for the two-phase Lok Sabha polls came into force. This includes cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals.

After the MCC came into force, the amount of cash seized was ₹98.89 crore, while liquor worth ₹179.39 crore, narcotics worth ₹11.96 crore and freebies worth ₹9.53 crore were seized, said a release.

A total of 2,325 FIRs have been registered with regard to seizures of cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals and freebies. The Excise Department has booked 3,400 heinous cases, 5,571 cases for breach of licence conditions, 193 cases under NDPS Act, and 34,731 cases under Section 15 (a) of the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965.

A file photo of food kits seized by the flying squad.

FIR filed against BJP leaders

A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against Bharatiya Janata Party president J.P. Nadda, the party's IT cell head Amit Malviya, and Karnataka unit chief B.Y. Vijayendra over a social media post for allegedly intimidating members of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) not to vote for a particular candidate.

The action was taken following a complaint lodged by the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee with the Election Commission and police on May 5 alleging violation of model code of conduct, they said. They were booked under the sections of the Representation of People Act and section 505 (2) [Statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes] of the Indian Penal Code.

"This election will not only determine the defeats and wins of parties, but also that of government programmes in favour of women.

SIDDARAMAIAH
Chief Minister

Good response to voter helpline

The Election Commission has so far received 39,167 calls through the voter helpline. Of these, 38,845 people sought information, 39 gave feedback, 36 made suggestions and 247 registered complaints. The commission, in a release, said that all calls have been addressed.

"I appeal to BJP workers to visit all houses and enthuse voters to go to polling booths to vote. I am also participating as a worker in this endeavour.

B.Y. VIJAYENDRA
BJP State president

A file photo of a rehabilitation camp set up near Sindhanur in Raichur district.

Bangladeshi immigrants await citizenship, hope to vote in the next election

Sharat S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

Another election will pass without being able to vote for members of several hundred families living in the rehabilitation camp set up for refugees from Bangladesh near Sindhanur in Raichur district.

If the delay in notification of rules for Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) denied many possible first-time voters a chance to cast their vote during the 2023 Assembly elections, the same continues in this Lok Sabha elections as online registration process for citizenship has just begun.

Registration process

With the registration for citizenship under the CAA commencing, many are hoping to get voting rights by the next elections. Sindhanur comes under the Koppal Lok Sabha constituency.

The CAA was passed in the Parliament in 2019, but rules were notified only in March 2024.

The total population in the four Bangla camp that were set up in the 1970s to accommodate Hindu refugees from Bangladesh during and after 1971 Indo-Pak war is estimated to be over around 20,000.

"Several hundreds of people - in some cases parents - are yet to secure citizenship. Once they secure citizenship, their children will also become citizens and get the benefits, including voting rights," said Pranab Bala, an advocate and resident of the Bangla camp.

While the 932 families that were among the first to be rehabilitated by the Indian government received citizenship rights, about 300 families that came after them or those who were married into the families in Sindhanur, have been facing citizenship issues.

"Changes to citizenship laws post 2004 mandates citizenship of both parents to enable citizenship to the child, and many families have one of the parents who do not have Indian citizenship," Mr. Bala explained. Before the 2004 rule, a child could get citizenship if one of the parents was an Indian citizen, he explained.

Applications low

According to Mr. Bala, the number of applications made since the online process started a few weeks has been low. "Contradictory statements have been made by political parties across the country creating confusion. Some are scared to apply providing the place of origin in Bangladesh, address and date of entering the country among other details needed. The process also requires affidavits and proof of religion, all of which are time consuming documents to build. Awareness level is also low," he said.

Mr. Bala was among those who have been trained in Delhi to facilitate the application process.

"We are hoping that the number of people applying online will increase. We are trying to create awareness and encourage people to apply." After the online application, the Deputy Commissioner's office will call the applicants for verification to complete the process.

Acid test for many veterans, new entrants as 14 constituencies go to the polls today

In 2019, the BJP had won all 14 Lok Sabha seats which the Congress wants to wrest now riding on the 'guarantee' schemes

BIG DAY

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

The second phase of polling in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies on Tuesday will see a bipolar electoral contest between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnataka.

It will be a deciding factor for the political survival of many BJP candidates and the political future of children of many Congress Ministers.

This phase of election will see the conclusion of voting for the election of 28 MPs from Karnataka to the 18th Lok Sabha. Counting will be on June 4.

A polling booth that has been decorated colorfully at Kenganur in Athani taluk of Belagavi district on Monday. Manned by women, these 'Sakhi' polling booths herald equality in the electoral process. ANI

Narratives at play

These constituencies located in central and northern Karnataka have seen numerous castes, religious, ideological, gender, economic and political identities being discussed in the course of the campaign at various points of time. However, the main discourse towards the tail end of the campaign veered towards "*kaam* (performance of guarantees of the Congress government) versus *Ram* (Hindutva)" in the region where the BJP made a clean sweep in 2019. The role of rebel candidates and murder of student Neha Hiremath may play a role in many constituencies.

These constituencies, which have a significant presence of the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, enabled the BJP to find a political footing in South India.

The region is significant for the BJP to regain its vote share it had lost in 2023 Assembly elections and also keep its number of MPs intact. Banking on five "guarantees", the Congress hopes to improve its tally in these constituencies.

The party, which had drawn a blank in 2019, has secured a huge chunk of seats in the last Assembly polls in these segments.

The JD(S), which has largely played a supporting role to the BJP, is battling an alleged sexual abuse case involving MP Prajwal Revanna and his father and MLA H.D. Revanna. The JD(S) has, however, not fielded any candidates.

The election would test the future and political relevance of former Chief Ministers Jagadish Shettar (Belagavi), Basavaraj Bommai (Haveri), former Minister B. Sriramulu (Ballari), former Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri (Uttara Kannada), and former BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa (Shivamogga).

The poll would be an acid test for Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, who is challenged by Lingayat seer Dingaleshwar Swami and campaigned against him alleging neglect of the community. Another Union Minister Bhagwant Khuba (Bidar) is likely to face a tough battle owing to internal groupism in the BJP.

It would be a battle of political prestige for the Jarkiholi brothers in Belagavi, and families of B.S. Yediyurappa in Shivamogga, and Shyamanur Shivashankarappa in Davangere.

Six women and two ex-IAS officers are in the fray in these constituencies.

Ministers' children

Voters would also decide the fate of children of four Ministers contesting elections for the first time.

Mr. Shettar is fighting against debutant Mrinal Hebblakar, son of Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar in Belagavi.

In Chikkodi, Priyanka Jarkiholi, daughter of Public Works Minister Satish Jarkihoi, is in the fray against Annasaheb Jolle, BJP MP. Independent candidate and former IAS officer Shambu Kallolikar might damage Congress's chances.

Agriculture Marketing Minister Shivananda Patil's daughter Samyukta Patil is in the battle in Bagalkot against BJP's P.C. Gaddigoudar, MP. Veena Kashappanavar, wife of Congress MLA Vijayananda Kashappanavar, who was ticket aspirant, could again spoil Ms. Patil's chances. In Bidar, another Minister Eshwar Khandre has fielded his son Sagar against Mr. Khuba.

Battle of wives

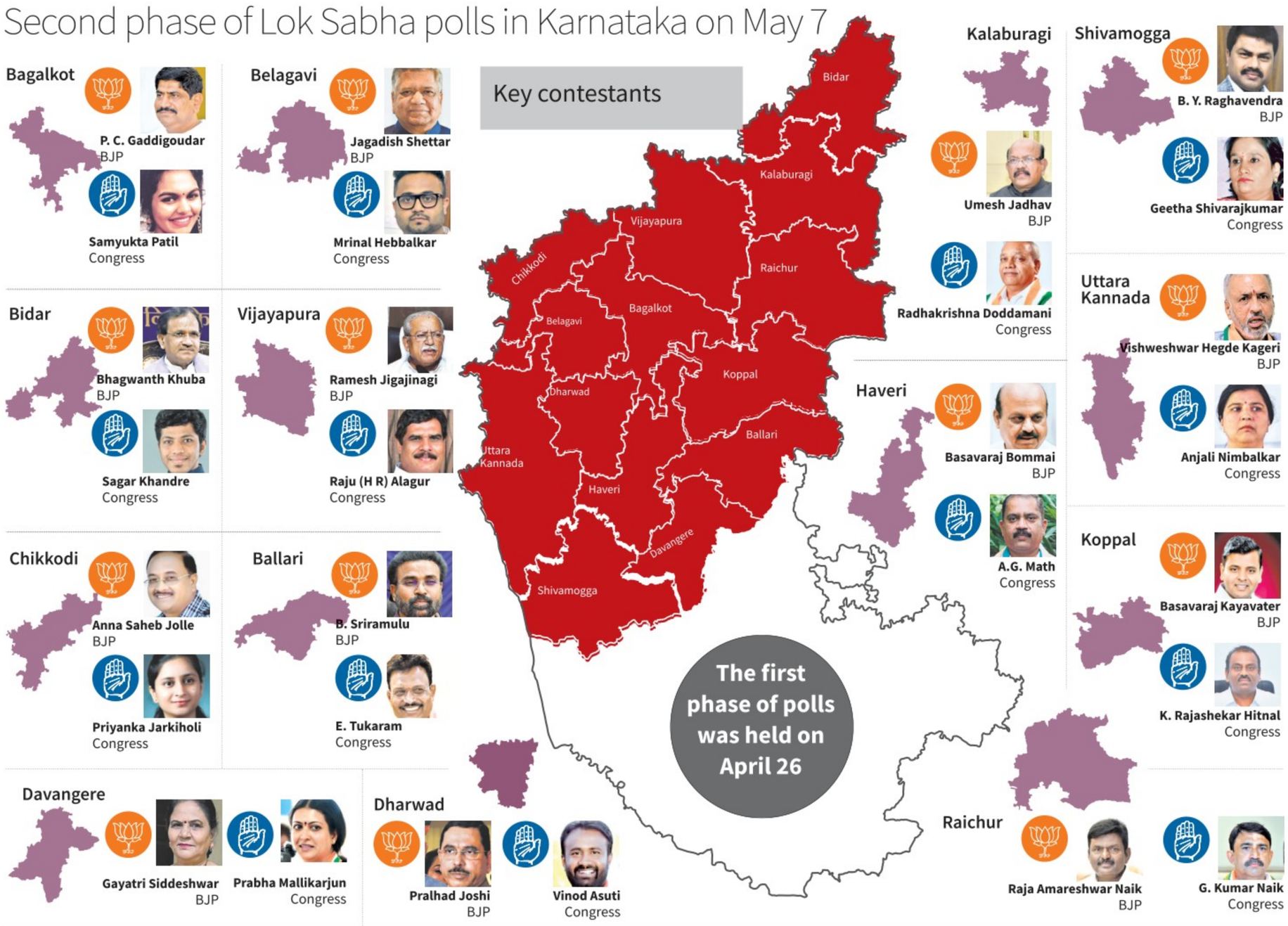
In a "battle of wives" in Davangere, Prabha Mallikarjun, wife of Minister S.S. Mallikarjun, is facing Gayathri Siddeshwar, wife of G.M. Siddeshwara, BJP MP. Independent candidate G.B. Vinaykumar from the Kuruba community is likely to cut the votes of both parties.

It's a battle of prestige for AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in Kalaburagi, who is leading the campaign against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr. Kharge's son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani is up against Umesh Jadhav (BJP). Mr. Kharge lost to Mr. Jadhav in 2019.

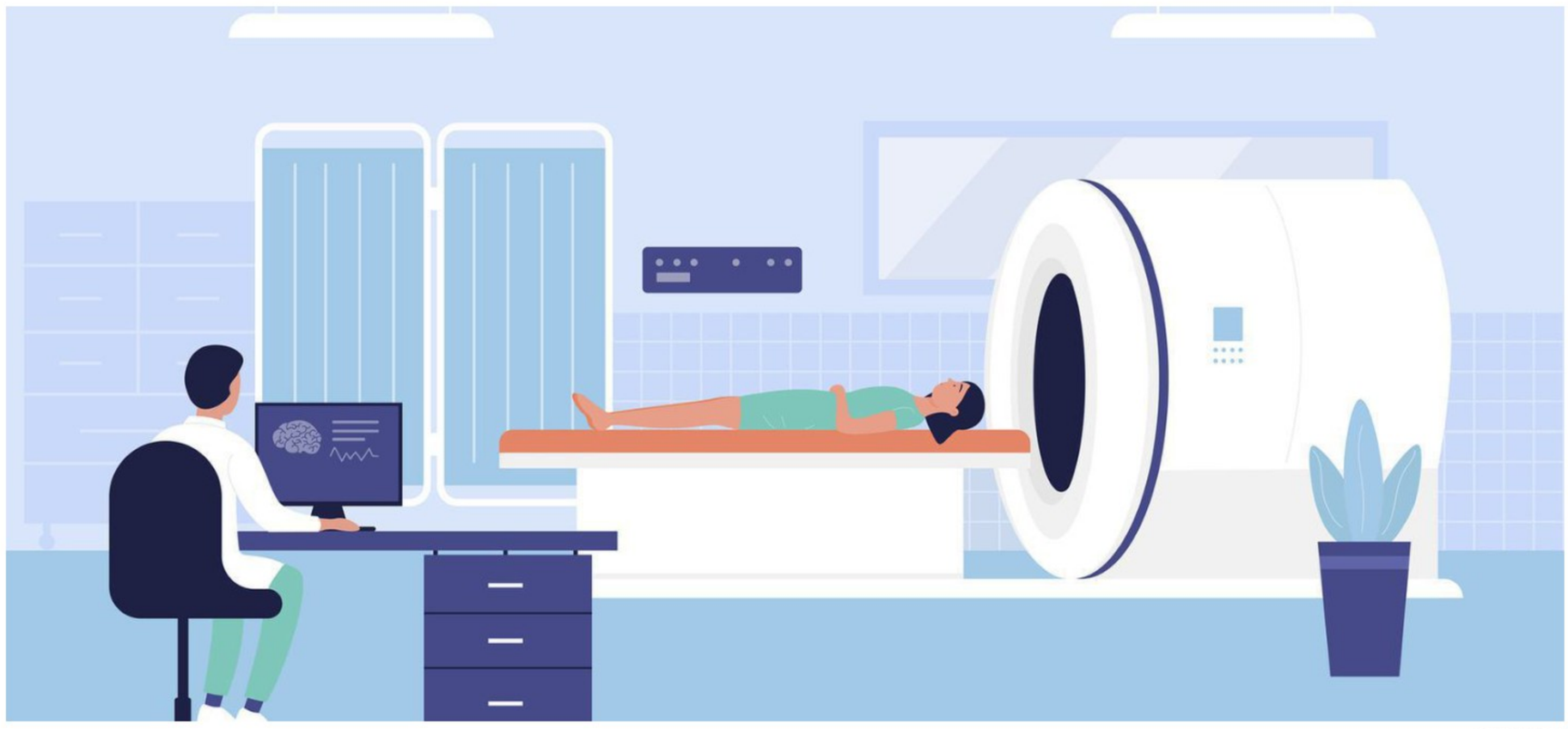
Triangular contest

Shivamogga constituency is likely to witness a triangular contest. BJP rebel leader Mr. Eshwarappa challenged the "dynasty politics" of Mr. Yediyurappa, whose son B.Y. Raghavendra is contesting against Geetha Shivarajkumar (Congress), daughter of former Chief Minister S. Bangarappa.

Second phase of Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka on May 7



BUILDING BLOCKS



GETTY IMAGES

Understanding the science behind magnetic resonance imaging

MRI scans are used to obtain images of soft tissues within the body. It is a non-invasive diagnostic procedure widely used to image the brain, the cardiovascular system, the spinal cord and joints, various muscles, the liver, arteries, etc

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

For those trying to look inside the human body without surgery, magnetic resonance imaging is an indispensable tool. The underlying techniques were worked out in the early 1970s and later in the same decade, Paul Lauterbur and Peter Mansfield refined them to pave the way for their commercial use. For these efforts, they were awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine in 2003, speaking to the significance of the technique and its place in modern medical diagnostics.

What is magnetic resonance imaging?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is used to obtain images of soft tissues within the body. Soft tissue is any tissue that hasn't become harder through calcification. It is a non-invasive diagnostic procedure widely used to image the brain, the cardiovascular system, the spinal cord and joints, various muscles, the liver, arteries, etc.

Its use is particularly important in the observation and treatment of certain cancers, including prostate and rectal cancer, and to track neurological conditions including Alzheimer's, dementia, epilepsy, and stroke. Researchers have also used MRI scans of changes in blood flow to infer the way the activity of neurons is changing in the brain; in this form, the technique is called functional MRI.

Because of the MRI technique's use of strong magnetic fields, individuals with embedded metallic objects (like shrapnel) and metallic implants, including pacemakers, may not be able to undergo MRI scans. In fact, if they have a credit card in their pocket, the magnetic fields will wipe its magnetic strip!

How does MRI work?

An MRI procedure reveals an image of a body part using the hydrogen atoms in that part. A hydrogen atom is simply one proton with one electron around it. These atoms are all spinning, with axes pointing in random directions. Hydrogen atoms are abundant in fat and water, which are present almost throughout the body.

An MRI machine has four essential components. The machine itself looks like a giant doughnut. The hole in the centre, called the bore, is where the person whose body is to be scanned is inserted. Inside the doughnut is a powerful superconducting magnet whose job is to produce a powerful and stable magnetic field around the body. Once the body part to be scanned is at the centre of the bore, the magnetic field is switched on.

Each hydrogen atom has a powerful magnetic moment, which means in the presence of a magnetic field, the atom's spin axis will point along the field's direction. The superconducting magnet applies a magnetic field down the centre of the machine, such that the axes of roughly half of the hydrogen atoms in the part to be scanned are pointing one way and the other half are pointing the other way. This matching is almost exact: in around a million atoms, only a handful remain unmatched – that is, a small population of 'excess' atoms pointing one way or the other.

The machine's third component is a device that emits a radiofrequency pulse at the part under the scanner. When the pulse is 'on', only the small population of 'excess' atoms absorbs the radiation and gets excited. When the pulse goes 'off', these atoms emit the absorbed energy and return to their original, lower energy states. The frequency of pulse the 'excess' atoms have to absorb is called the Larmor frequency. Its value depends on the strength of the magnetic field and the type of tissue in which the atoms are present. The fourth and final component, a detector, receives the emissions and converts them to signals, which are sent to a computer that uses them to recreate two- or three-dimensional images of that part of the body.

What are the pros of MRI?

After the big, powerful magnetic field comes on, the MRI machine activates three magnets that produce smaller magnetic fields that are weaker than the main field by about 80-times, if not more. These fields also have a gradient, that is, they are not uniform. These fields interfere with the main field at the part to be scanned such that the resulting field highlights very specific portions, which can be the focus of the scan.

By turning the gradient magnets on and off in specific sequences, the MRI machine can thus scan portions that are just a few millimetres wide. The sequences can also be organised such that the machine scans different parts of the individual's body without asking them to move inside the bore.

In fact, because of the way the machine is built and the magnets are organised inside it, an MRI scan can practically image the body from all useful directions and, if required, in very small increments.

When the 'excess' atoms emit the energy they'd absorbed to return to their lower energy states, the return happens over a duration called the T1 relaxation time. The hydrogen atoms in water have different values of T1 depending on the tissue in which they're present. An MRI machine exploits this fact to show different tissues in different shades of grey. Clinicians may also inject an individual with a contrast agent – typically a gadolinium-based compound – that lowers the T1 time in some tissues, improving their visibility in an MRI scan.

Finally, researchers have deeply investigated the effects of strong magnetic fields on the body. MRI scans don't pose any threats; once the magnetic fields are taken away, the atoms in the scanned part don't remain affected. There is no long-term harm associated with scans. However, a scan's effects on pregnant women aren't as well-studied, so many scanning facilities simply refuse such appointments.

What are the cons of MRI?

MRI machines are expensive: depending on the specifications, including the strength of the magnetic fields and the imaging quality, they cost from a few tens of lakh rupees to a few crores. Diagnostic facilities pass this cost on to its patients. Based on the clinical requirements, scans often cost ₹10,000 or more each – a sizeable sum in India, especially for those without insurance, and more so for those required to get multiple MRI scans.

These costs are compounded by the discomfort of using the machine. While it's an advantage that an individual inside the bore doesn't have to move for the machine to scan different parts, the individual is actually expected to lie still for tens of minutes, until the scan is complete. If the individual moves, the resulting image will be distorted and the scan will have to be repeated. The problem is exacerbated if the individual is claustrophobic (although some 'open-bore' MRI machine designs can alleviate this issue).

Generating a magnetic field of strength 1 tesla or more – as the main magnet does – is no mean feat. To do so, a heavy current is passed through coils of wire made of a superconducting material. When the setup is cooled with liquid helium, the wires become superconducting and the current passing through them plus the geometry of the wires produces a strong magnetic field. While the wires don't lose any energy as heat – which a non-superconducting material would – maintaining the setup is energy-intensive, which is expensive.

Further, the switching of such heavy currents within the machine, as the gradient coils are operated in sequence, means the machine produces loud noises when operating.

This can be an additional source of discomfort for the individual.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Here's a quiz on constituencies and candidates in the fray in phase 3 of the Indian general elections to the Lok Sabha

Srinivasan Ramani

QUESTION 1

This constituency in Gujarat was host to one of the most pivotal "satyagrahas" against the British government and was led by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The movement began in June 1928 and was a farmer's agitation protesting a hiked tax levied by the Bombay Presidency. Name the place.

QUESTION 2

This constituency in West Bengal was twice represented by a former President of India. Name the constituency and the ex-President.

QUESTION 3

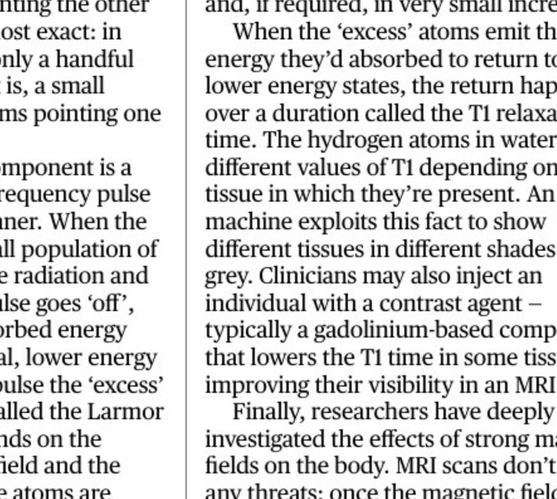
This constituency in Assam is one of only four that elected Independents in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It was won by a former militant of the United Liberation Front of Asom. Name the constituency and its representative elected in 2019.

QUESTION 4

A former Member of Parliament from Madhepura, Bihar, he was also the chairman of a commission that prepared a report that was completed in 1980 and whose recommendations were sought to be implemented by the V. P. Singh led Janata Dal government in 1990. Name the MP.

QUESTION 5

The urban constituency of Agra was twice represented between 1999 and 2009 by this actor. Name the popular actor.



Visual question:
Name this candidate from Kolhapur who is also a descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji of the Maratha empire.
EMMANUAL YOGINI

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The location where Bannister ran the race and the occasion for the race. **Ans: At Oxford University's Iffley Road track during the annual match between the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) and the university**
2. Name the two other runners alongside Bannister. **Ans: Chris Chatway and Chris Brasher**
3. The barrier-breaking time retuned by Bannister that has gone into athletics folklore. **Ans: 3 minutes, 59.04 seconds**
4. The feat to which Bannister compared his feat. **Ans: The summiting of Mt. Everest which took place on May 29, 1953**
5. The Olympic champion who was the commentator on Radio BBC for the historic run. **Ans: 1924 100m champion Harold Abrahams**
6. The specialisation of Roger Bannister as a doctor. **Ans: He became a neurologist**
Visual: Name this famed rival of Bannister. **Ans: John Landy**
Early Birds: Rajmohan. V| K.N. Viswanathan| Jyot Prakash Gulati| Debarati Kar| M. Suresh Kumar

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The canvas painting is quite beautiful

He is an old fogey who does not understand the importance of art and culture

S. Upendran

What is the difference between 'canvas' and 'canvass'? (N. Prema)

Although there is a difference in spelling, the two words are homophones – they are pronounced the same way. The first syllable is pronounced like the word 'can' and the vowel in the second, sounds like the 'a' in 'china'. Both words are pronounced 'CAN-ves' with the stress on the first syllable. 'Canvas' is a noun, and it refers to the thick fabric usually used to make bags, tents, sails, etc. Artists usually paint on canvas.

We plan to take a canvas tent.

'Canvass', on the other hand, is mainly used as a verb, and when you see this word, think of politicians. When a candidate canvasses for votes, he goes around meeting people and requests them to vote for him. The word can also be used to mean to investigate.

The aging star decided not to canvass for his son or his party.

How is the word 'fogey' pronounced? (Jyot Gulati, Rohtak)

The first syllable 'fo' rhymes with the words 'so', 'no' and 'go', while the following 'g' sounds like the 'g' in 'get', 'gut' and 'glass'. The final 'ey' sounds like the 'i' in 'hit', 'sit' and 'bit'. The word is pronounced 'FOE-gi' with the stress on the first syllable. It is also possible to spell the word, 'fogy'.

According to scholars, 'fogey/fogy' comes from the Scottish 'foggie' meaning 'army veteran'. Nowadays, the word is mostly used to refer to someone who is old, boring and not so stylish – in other words, someone who is 'uncool'. It is quite possible since army veterans were conservative and had their own traditional ways of doing things, the word acquired this meaning.

When you're a teenager, anyone over 30 is seen as an old fogey.

What is the meaning of 'sic'? (T. Sheshadri, Chennai)

The word comes from the Latin 'sic' meaning 'thus', and in English, it is pronounced like the word 'sick'. It appears only in writing; it is never used in every day conversation. Normally, when you use this word in your writing, you wish to make it clear to the reader that the error that appears in the sentence is intentional. Sic is normally used when you quote others; by using this word within brackets, you are informing the reader that it is the speaker or writer whom you are quoting who has made a mistake – not you. If the author you are quoting has written, 'The cats and it's three kittens are ruining the garden', you can reproduce it exactly, and insert the word 'sic' within brackets next to 'it's' – thus making it clear that it is the author who has spelt the word incorrectly.

Fourty (sic) children are reported missing.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Rueful:
feeling or expressing pain or sorrow for sins or offenses

Synonyms: remorseful, contrite

Usage: *She looked at him with a rueful smile.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/ruefulpro

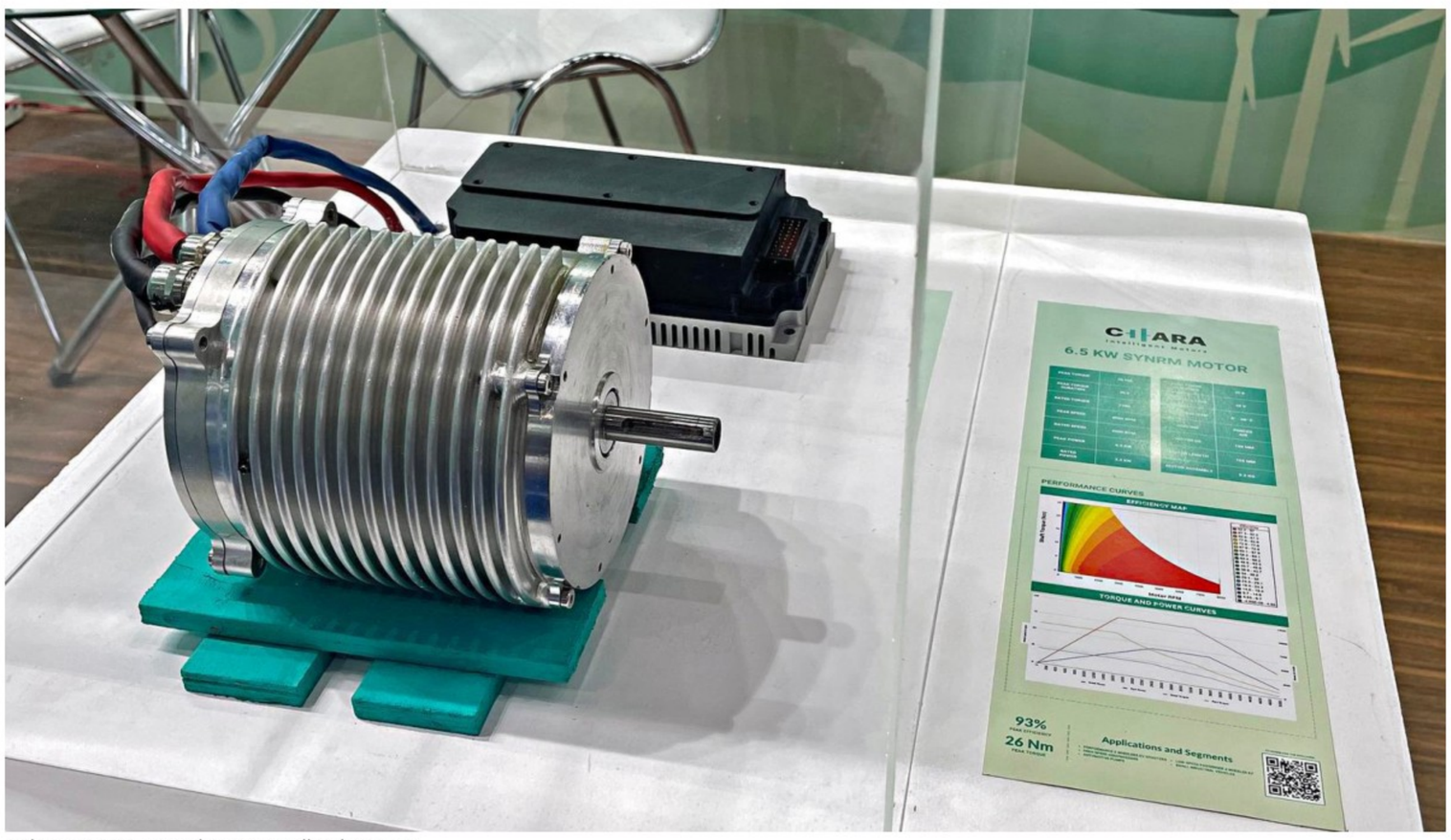
International Phonetic Alphabet: /ru:fʊl/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

As the EV market vrooms, this Bengaluru start-up tries to get its motor running

Bengaluru based start-up Chara came together to build a new venture, the idea was to develop something for the EV segment which has been growing and hence would need new technologies

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU



3.5kW 48-96V Motor and amp controller showcase.

As the world slowly transitions from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles, one of the components that has been a key driver of this change is the motor.

Most electric vehicles use permanent magnet motors which offer 90% efficiency and hence considered the best bet currently.

However, permanent magnets are made of several alloys which also include rare earth minerals, and this pose a bunch of challenges.

Bengaluru-based deep-tech start-up Chara Technologies is trying to devise a solution to this by developing motors that are free of rare earth minerals.

The journey

"'Chara' means motion," explains Mahalingam Koushik, co-founder and CTO of the start-up.

"The world is transitioning from a fossil fuel-based energy economy to electron energy economy. The key driver in the new energy economy which converts electricity into mechanical energy will be a motor. This is the space we are trying to provide a solution in."

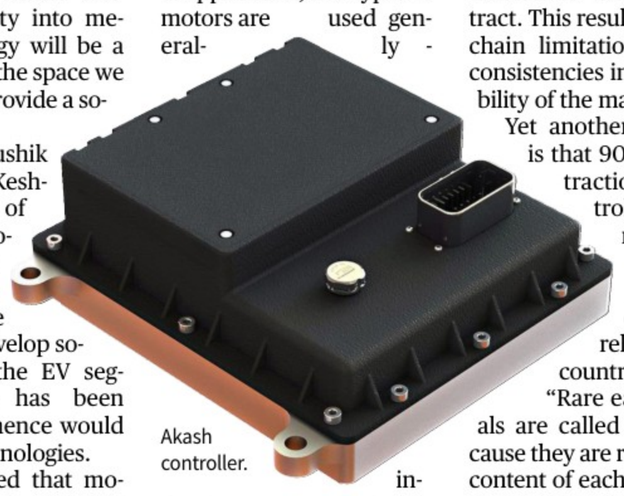
When Koushik and Bhaktha Keshavachar (CEO of Chara) came together to build a new venture, the idea was to develop something for the EV segment which has been growing and hence would need new technologies.

They noticed that motors offered a possibility of innovation as most motors and controllers were being imported.

Ravi Prasad, Chief Motor Designer at Chara, soon joined the duo, and the company was registered in 2019.

The context

Depending upon the type of application, two types of motors are used generally - induction motors and permanent magnet motors.


Akash controller.

Induction motors which are widely used in household appliances have around 70% efficiency on average.

Permanent magnet motors offer much higher efficiency of 90% but are costlier and the rare earth minerals used in these are difficult to mine and extract. This results in supply chain limitations and inconsistencies in the availability of the material.

Yet another challenge is that 90% of its extraction is controlled by China which makes manufacturers heavily reliant on one country.

"Rare earth minerals are called so not because they are rare, but the content of each element in the ore is very less," explains Koushik.

Elements like Neodymium and Dysprosium are used in motors, but in a ton of ore, only a few grams of each can be found. "These elements are all found together because they are very similar in atomic weight and size. So, extracting them from each other takes a lot of chemical processing and chemical leaching agents. Also, some of the rare earth elements are radioactive, and produce radioactive waste. So, ecologically it is not scalable."

Chara's technology

Chara's motor has been designed based on synchronous reluctance motor technology which according to the team helps them to build motors which perform as good as permanent magnets but without the price concerns associated with the latter.

"Depending on the power rating, we will be anywhere 15-30% cheaper than permanent magnet motors," Koushik claims.

The start-up's offering includes the motor, the controller which drives the motor, and the software.

"We have done a lot of innovation in the motor design, controllers and controller algorithms. We have achieved very good power density and smooth performance."

"These motors and controllers have been tested in labs as well as in vehicles on the road," remarks Koushik.

The team is also developing a cloud platform where data collected from the motors and controllers would be used for analytics and in building a digital twin which will then help to do predictive dynamics, diagnostics and improvements on the product.

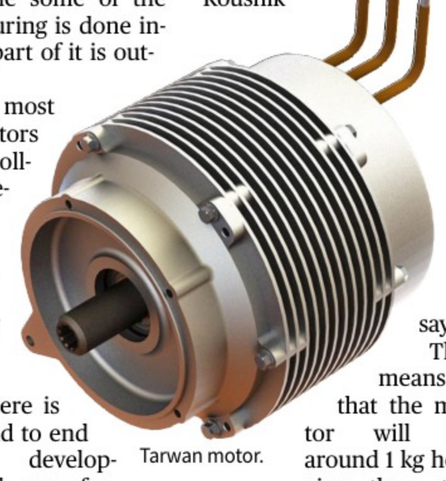
Multiple applications

The company has currently developed motors for two wheelers, three wheelers (passenger as well as cargo) and four wheelers like commercial vehicles and tractors.

The team is also building a 125-kilowatt peak motor suitable for a mid-size SUV. While some of the manufacturing is done in-house, a part of it is outsourced.

"Today most of the motors and controllers are being imported or manufactured locally by established MNCs. There is limited end to end localised development and manufacturing, which is what we are doing."

"We develop the products end to end - the motor design, electromagnetic design, mechanical design, thermal design and structural analysis; And then when it comes to the controller, electronics design, thermal design, mechanical design for the enclosure and the heat sync, and the software that runs on the controller," says Koushik who notes that this helps the team to have a better control over design and supply.


Tarwan motor.

Further improvements

He, however, admits that the journey has not been without challenges. One of the technical challenges that the team had to deal with was the power density problem associated with synchronous reluctance motors.

Power density is the amount of power or energy in a given mass or volume.

"If you look at permanent magnet motors, they have generally a power density of 2.1 kW/kg. For our motors, it is 1.7-1.8 kW/kg. That is one limitation. It is slightly longer and heavier since we have had to use more steel and copper to achieve similar performance," says Koushik. This means that the motor will be around 1 kg heavier than the typical ones. However, given it is less than half a percent of the total gross weight of the vehicle, it doesn't affect the vehicle performance, claims Koushik.

"Due to this limitation, there are certain applications for which our technology is not suitable today, for example in drones where every gram matters. But for anything that sits on earth or moves on the road, this works," he says, further adding that the team is working on some improvements.

Going forward

While the motor and controller have multiple applications such as EV, industrial use, HVAC and appliances, the Chara team is focused primarily on the EV segment given the novelty of the industry and the growth expected in the segment in the coming days.

"We are also looking at industrial applications where sustainability and efficiency would be important. If people are looking at more on the operational cost, then our motors will be a very good solution."

The company currently claims to have early orders from 14 different clients, each of whom has ordered about 10-15 of the products. Around 30 units have been shipped so far, says Koushik. The start-up which received its first grant from the IISc MSME Centre of Excellence raised its first round of funding in 2021. The round was led by Kalaari Capital with participation from IIMA Ventures. In 2022 December it raised another round that was led by Exfinity Venture Partners.

Koushik says, "Now that we have proven the technology, we would like to deploy the motor in large numbers in the coming days. The rare earth mineral problem is not unique to India, it is global problem. So, we would like to build our solutions for the world."

Karnataka's most unique dishes under one roof

From goli baje and banana buns to alsande beejade koddel (black eye bean curry) and Mangalore cucumber curry were in much demand

Aakansha Munshi
BENGALURU

The culinary festival 'MTR Karunadu Swada' in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Spread from the MTR Karunadu Swada event.

Shubhi A. from Uttarakhand and Shruthi T. from Hyderabad enjoyed their akki rottis with mushroom curry and tamarind chutney at the Kodagu counter. "A lot of rotis are being presented here which are not commonly found, and they are made from authentic ingredients as well.

It was really refreshing to see such a combination, especially all these varieties of vegetarian food displayed here," said Shubhi.

Like them, people who wanted a taste of authentic dishes from Karnataka – locals or otherwise – headed to the 'MTR Karunadu Swada', a culinary festival celebrating the food of the State last weekend. The two-day event was organised at Jayamahal Palace in Bengaluru, the event had several counters that presented dishes from Uttara Karnataka, Hale Mysuru, Kodagu, Dakshina Karnataka, Kalyana Karnataka, and Udupi region.

At the Kodagu counter, kadambut, steamed rice flour dumplings, and kaipuli shunti parangi malu juice made out of bitter orange, ginger, and bird's eye chili, were popular apart from akki rotti and other curries.

On the other side, the Dakshina Kannada cuisine was also a favourite among visitors.

From goli baje and banana buns to alsande beejade koddel (black eye bean curry) and Mangalore cucumber curry were in much demand. There was also the Kota style Udupi mattu brinjal huli, a sambar made out of green brinjal, served with brahmi leaf chutney, which many liked.

Other States

The event was also attended by many people from other States who wanted to relish the original flavours of Karnataka.

Deviena Srivastava, a native of Lucknow, said, "This is the first time that I am coming to a food fest which specifically talks about the flavours of Karnataka. It is really interesting to discover all these different kinds of dishes. For most North Indians, when we think of South Indian food, it is restricted to either idli, sambar or dosa. But, with such events, we can dive into all the kinds of dishes that South India has to offer." She found the banana buns with coconut chutney to be one of the best dishes presented at the event.

Belada Hannina Panaka, (Wood Apple Juice), at the Hale Mysuru counter, chikklunde, or sweet puffed rice dumplings at the Kodagu counter, Dharwad peda and Kardant at the Kalayana Karnataka counter were among the other delicacies which were savoured by many at the event.

The visitors agreed on the fact that the speciality of this event lay in the fact that it brought together dishes from parts of Karnataka which are not commercially available.

Unique dishes

Varun Krishna, a software engineer from the city, said, "The event presented multiple varieties of dishes which we do not find in hotels or restaurants. Even though I was born in Bengaluru, I have never seen all these dishes together at one place. Authentic food in the city is rare and even if you wish to order such local cuisine, it is difficult because you are not usually aware of the authentic names. To be here and to learn about all these new dishes was a really good experience."

MTR also announced the release of a special recipe book during the event which would aid its readers to recreate the same dishes from the comfort of their kitchens at home.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 7, 1974

Members Criticise PWD Working

Bangalore, May 6: Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda (Cong-O) Opposition leader, demanded in the State Assembly to-day a clear-cut reply from the Government about maintaining discipline in the Public Works Department.

Initiating the debate on the demands relating to public works and other allied heads for Rs. 41 crore, Mr. Deve Gowda dubbed the PWD as the "politicians" welfare department".

During the inconclusive debate, Mr. Deve Gowda alleged that funds amounting to several lakhs of rupees had been "illegally" paid by the PWD to nearly 90 works without estimates. In many such instances, letter of credit had been given by the Government in clear violation of the PWD code and in a particular case Rs. 20 lakhs had been paid within three days.

State Finances 'Basically Very Sound'

Bangalore, May 6: Mr. M.Y. Ghorpade, Finance Minister asserted in the State Assembly to-day, that the State's finances were "basically very sound". The temporary stoppage of payments by the Reserve Bank of India for a few hours on Saturday last was no reason for apprehension about the strength and soundness of the State's finances.

Making a statement within hours of his return from New Delhi this morning, the Minister told the House that the actual stoppage of payments was only for a couple of hours and normal payments had been resumed from to-day.

A happy rendezvous with words

RJ Anitha Rangaswamy says her new song 'Swalpa Swalpa,' struck a chord as those are usually the first Kannada words a non-Kannadiga picks up

Shilpa Anandraj

In high spirits Anita Ransaswamy (below) and stills from the music video. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The scorching summer kills not just your enthusiasm but also drains one of energy, so much that being upbeat is the last thing on one's mind. Not so for RJ Anitha Rangaswamy, who gets on a call from her home in South Bengaluru, to talk about her latest music video, 'Swalpa Swalpa'.

"Talking is my profession and forte, and earns me my bread and butter," says the chirpy Anitha, who needs no prompting as she narrates the story behind her work, the song and its release.

She sounds happy and cheerful and the word "beautiful" is added to almost every sentence she speaks. Anitha wears many hats apart from RJ – lyricist, music composer and voice over artist (primarily for FM Radio ads). She has been writing jingles for the radio and other platforms for 20 years and recently released an independent music video titled 'Swalpa Swalpa.'

The song has garnered over 1.2 lakh views since it was uploaded last month on her YouTube channel. This is her third song following 'A Tribute song for Dr Puneeth Rajkumar', sung by Shankar Mahadevan and playback singers from Kannada cinema and 'Amma, an Ode to all Mothers' featuring Kannada cinema actors and their mothers.

'Swalpa Swalpa' is special to Anitha has she launched her YouTube channel with this song. Anitha has written the lyrics for 'Swalpa Swalpa' and also composes the music. The song is produced by musician Hriday Goswami (known for mixing/ mastering Raj Shetty's *Tobi* and *Ondu Motteya Kathe)*. The video is directed by Panidhar Revannur, also a wildlife filmmaker and features Abhinav Vishwanathan, a popular actor in Kannada serials (*Nannarasi Radhe* and *Tripura Sundari),* and model and actor Harita Shah. It is sung by Rajat Hegde, who has worked in Kannada cinema and was one of the semi-finalists with *Voice of India* under Arman Mallik's team.

> "'Swalpa Swalpa' is a fresh and romantic song. Rajat deserves fulsome praise for doing justice to the song. I happened to write it on a beautiful day."
>
> **ANITHA RANGASWAMY**

A student of English literature, Anitha worked as a copywriter before finding her way into RJing. "'Swalpa Swalpa' is a fresh and romantic song. Rajat deserves fulsome praise for doing justice to the song. I happened to write it on a beautiful day."

The song, Anitha says is popular not only for the music and the visuals but also the title. "*Swalpa Swalpa* are the first Kannada words a non-Kannadiga picks up. If you are to ask someone who has recently moved to Bangalore if they understand Kannada, the most common response is *swalpa swalpa*."

Anitha has written the lyrics for *Newton's 3rd Law*, a movie by The Australia World Pictures and the Kannada movie *Tortoise* directed by Suraj Shetty. Anitha says she writes and composes the song concurrently. "This is the way I am most comfortable working, this is my way of romancing with words."

Anitha is currently in the process of releasing 'Swalpa Swalpa' in Hindi, which will be released towards the end of May. "We are going to do a literal translation but transcreation and composition. We look for words that will sound good in Hindi without losing the essence of the original song."

Kalakrida: Empowering children through art

Arkatapa Basu

As temperatures soared in the Garden City leaving its residents wishing for the summer holidays from their childhood, children from government schools living in and around Jakkur were drawing, dancing and singing their way through the heat.

Organised by the Ahum Trust in collaboration with the Satya Foundation, Kalakrida is a 15-day, art-intensive summer camp for children from the ages of 10 to 18.

The summer camp hosts a range of activities such as movement, music, creative writing, theatre, *konnakol* (performing percussion syllables vocally in South Indian Carnatic music), painting and filmmaking. This year, the camp began on April 15 and ended on May 4 with a final performance by the children showcasing their newly acquired skills.

"We wanted to give these children a space to explore avenues that might be interesting to them as well as keep them off the streets," says Anuradha Venkataraman, the founder of Ahum Trust and a classical dancer.

During summer holidays children don't have school and their parents are working, Anuradha said. "Their neighbourhoods might not be healthy or conducive for them. Our aim was to engage them for a couple hours for a few days and give them the opportunity to explore their creativity."

When Kalakrida was started in 2016, 30 children participated. This edition saw over 100 children participating in the workshop. Two sessions were conducted by artists every day where movement, music and creative writing occupied the morning hours while painting, *konnakol* and theatre took up the evening hours.

Exclusively for children The workshop is all about fun and creativity. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Artistes such as Priyanka Chandrasekhar, Preethi Bhardwaj, Sampada Marballi, Rashmi Ravikumar, Shradha Raj, Pavithra Prashanth, Navya Varma and Shwetha were this year's facilitators and they taught the children a little about their respective vocations.

Recalling a fond memory from a previous camp, Anuradha says, "We had a boy who was quite inattentive and disruptive during sessions. When the painting class began however, he was completely engrossed. He painted a scene from a mutton shop that was particularly striking."

"It just proved to us that given the right environment and tools, the talent and creativity of these children can flourish."

Talking about how she has seen some of the regular participants grow over the last few years, Anuradha notes that apart from being able to express themselves freely, the children develop an innate sense of self.

"Their confidence is boosted not only in their performances, but also in their academics and everyday life. For instance, some participants who have been attending the camp for the last seven years emceed last year's final performance."

While Kalakrida has been crowdfunded for the last seven years, this was the first time they were sponsored by the Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies.

Anuradha has big plans for the future. As Kalakrida is back on its feet after the isolation of the pandemic years, Ahum Trust plans to conduct a research-based study on the impact of the summer camp. She also aims to take Kalakrida all over Bengaluru and host similar camps for children.

Traipsing through parallel universes

Ruth Priyadarshini Dhanaraj

Ever been plagued by doubt that the road not taken might have had better scenery or more interesting strangers or a pot of gold at its end?

In her book *If-Then-Else* (Vishwakarma Publishing), Sandhya Ranganathan explores the many choices one can take and the avenues that open up as a result, through the life of her protagonist, a recently-retrenched IT employee.

"I have wanted to be a writer ever since I was 10-years-old; I would write poems and stories even though at that age you do not really know how to complete a story. And I have always wanted to write a book," says the Bengaluru-based author.

Now as a grown-up with a job in technical communications, Sandhya is still writing and *If-Then-Else* is not her first book, though it is her first work of fiction. "In 2016, I put together a little bedtime story for my daughter, titled *Mia Finds a Home*. There was a graphics designer in my team and we collaborated on this fun project. My second book, *Burma to Bangalore* is my father's autobiography which I co-authored."

Quantum options Author Sandhya Ranganathan with her book . SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

She adds, "My grandfather was in the British Army and my father was born in Burma, but then they had to flee and eventually found their way to Bangalore. It is his story, but my father being an Army man too, wrote it like a military account. I worked on it so everybody could enjoy reading about those times in his life."

If-Then-Else, Sandhya says, "is a work of contemporary fiction. When Karthik, a software engineer based in Bangalore gets laid off, there are several choices in front of him. In this book, I use the concept of parallel universes and we see his journey in three different versions of himself. "

When she started writing the novel, Sandhya said she was actually laid off. "However, I did get back to work and it was during the lock-down that I was able to complete it." Since *If-Then-Else* is about a Bengaluru-based IT guy, real-life residents of the city will be pleased to find references to popular landmarks, watering holes and the like.

Can *If-Then-Else* be pegged as science fiction? Not really, says Sandhya. "I am interested in reading about quantum mechanics and quantum physics. When I read about Schrodinger's Cat, I was taken up with the idea that you can exist in parallel planes at the same time and the scientific thought process behind it."

Sandhya says, "I have used the concept more as a literary device – what are the choices we make and what are their consequences? We are constantly making choice.. We don't and can't think them all the way through."

CITYBEATS

A grand craft

ONGOING

A 10-day grand 'Arts and Crafts Fair', is on and will conclude on May 12.
The main attraction of the show are household items and decorative pieces. Inaugurated by Kannada actor and model Kavitha Gowda, the exhibition features crafts from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.
On at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumara Krupa Road.

Mushrooms anyone?

EVERY WEEKEND

Justbe by Nidhi Nahata has introduced mushroom Benedict, which can be paired with their in-house range of beverages and wines. Mushroom Benedict is made with sautéed mushrooms, wild spinach, avocado cream, and in-house baked whole wheat baguette.
At Just be by Nidhi Nahata, every Saturday and Sunday. Call 95138 04561.

More than a rock

ONGOING

Aukera Jewellery's Akshaya Tritiya-The Big Rock Fest, which is on, concludes on May 12. There is a display of some of the "finest and rarest" solitaire like trillion cut, half-moon cut, lily cut, trapezoid cut and large rocks. There are also diamonds in hues of pink sky, aqua blue and champaign.
At Aukera Grown Diamonds, Dickenson Road and Jayanagar. Entry is free.

Will not allow even .5% quota for Muslims: Nadda

Cong. and its allies are 'anti-Ram, anti-national and against reservations for the SC/ST/OBC', says the BJP national president at a meeting in Nalgonda

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

BJP national president J.P. Nadda has accused the Congress and its allies of being "anti-Ram, anti-national and against reservations for the SC/ST/OBC", and stated that they do not deserve to be voted to power in the Lok Sabha elections.

"I am saying this with full responsibility that the Congress will cut the quota of SC/ST/OBCs and hand it over to the Muslims. They have done it four times here, and every time the courts had intervened. We will not allow even 0.5% quota to go the Muslims' way," he asserted at a public meeting in Nalgonda on Monday.

Continuing the party's strident stance against reservations for Muslims, Mr. Nadda accused Karnataka Chief Minister K. Siddaramaiah of reinstating the 4% quota for minorities after the BJP government led by Basavaraj Bommai had reverted the quota to the OBCs. "Beware, these people will snatch away your rights if you give them power," he said.

The BJP president alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had supported JNU students' agitation when they had organised a protest "in support of the main accused in Parliament attack" where "anti-national" slogans were raised. "Will you given power to such people? One among the protesters is also contesting in this election under the Congress ticket," he claimed.

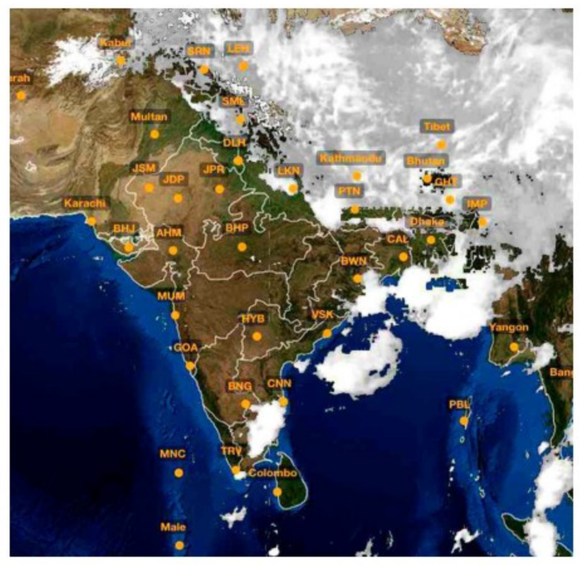
BJP president J.P. Nadda holds a plough during a public meeting for the third phase of the Lok Sabha polls, in Peddapalli on Monday.

In the same vein, Mr. Nadda charged the Congress of being "anti-Ram" as senior leader Sonia Gandhi had filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court where it was stated "Ram is an imaginary person with no historical or scientific evidence. But, once you elected Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister, the courts cleared the decks and a grand Ram temple has been built," he attested.

The Gandhis were also accused of keeping "silent" when DMK leaders including Udaynidhi Stalin and A. Raja have been comparing 'Sanatana Dharma' with various diseases like "dengue, malaria and AIDS" and questioned if such leaders should be given support. The BJP leader, campaigning in support of S.Saidi Reddy, said a vote for Mr. Modi will propel the country towards progress and development which will have a ripple effect on Telangana and Nalgonda, paving the way for employment opportunities for the youth. "Mr. Modi has introduced a new political culture in the country and left no stone unturned in the last 10 years with HIRA – highways, internet, railways and airways with 55,000 km of national highways and 52,000 track built and 2 lakh villages connected with internet," he said. In Telangana, 2 crore houses will be built for the downtrodden, he promised.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh, south interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Hot and humid weather likely to prevail over coastal Karnataka and Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	17	27.5	18.7	Kozhikode	—	37.9	30.2
Ahmedabad	—	41.2	27.0	Kurnool	—	45.3	31.5
Aizawl	42	25.8	17.4	Lucknow	—	40.2	26.6
Allahabad	—	44.0	26.7	Madurai	—	42.2	29.4
Bengaluru	—	36.3	24.2	Mangaluru	—	34.1	26.8
Bhopal	—	40.7	27.2	Mumbai	—	33.0	26.8
Bhubaneswar	10.5	39.8	28.8	Mysuru	—	—	—
Chandigarh	—	40.8	23.9	New Delhi	—	40.7	24.4
Chennai	—	39.1	29.0	Patna	—	34.6	24.7
Coimbatore	—	38.8	26.4	Port Blair	—	34.4	27.2
Dehradun	—	38.4	21.3	Puducherry	—	35.6	30.2
Gangtok	—	19.2	14.2	Pune	—	39.8	26.4
Goa	—	33.5	27.0	Raipur	—	43.0	30.5
Guwahati	43	24.2	20.0	Ranchi	—	41.1	24.9
Hubballi	—	39.0	23.0	Shillong	41	19.5	11.5
Hyderabad	—	41.9	28.1	Shimla	—	30.0	18.3
Imphal	32	21.7	14.7	Srinagar	—	27.4	9.3
Jaipur	—	41.2	27.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.4	28.2
Kochi	—	33.4	29.0	Tiruchi	—	42.7	29.5
Kohima	13	20.2	13.0	Vijayawada	—	40.4	30.0
Kolkata	—	36.4	29.7	Visakhapatnam	—	34.5	29.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	2	26	32	169	127	
Bengaluru	8	21	11	120	130	
Chennai	6	9	88	27	29	
Delhi	20	76	81	371	297	
Hyderabad	24	16	42	114	100	
Kolkata	8	16	39	38	59	
Lucknow	8	69	20	328	174	
Mumbai	34	103	71	32	64	
Pune	102	128	116	63	52	
Visakhapatnam	12	36	16	36	92	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhiwadi, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 283 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 27

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Karnataka not satisfied with Centre's ₹3,400-crore aid

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Karnataka government appeared dissatisfied with the Central allotment of a little over ₹3,400 crore towards drought relief on Monday in the Supreme Court. Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for the State, peremptorily said it is "contesting the data" provided by the Union government. Mr. Sibal, however, agreed to have the case listed after the summer vacations of the court in July.

The Centre's allotment of ₹3,454 crore came after Karnataka had moved the top court seeking a direction to the Union to release the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

The State said the Centre had opted to remain mum while the drought situation was slipping into a "grave humanitarian crisis". The State had asked for the release of ₹18,171.44 crore under the NDRF six months ago. The total estimated loss due to crop damage in the State is ₹35,162.05 crore, the petition had said.

The State government had submitted three drought relief memoranda under various heads.

The court had previously advised the Union to resolve the issue amicably, reminding it that the Centre and States were equal partners in a federal system of governance.

The State had said it was reeling under severe drought, affecting the lives of its people. "For the Kharif 2023 season, a total of 223 out of the 236 taluks are declared as drought-affected, with 196 taluks categorised as severely affected. Karnataka as a whole recorded (-)56% deficit rainfall in June, which was the third lowest in the last 122 years for the State," the petition had submitted.

Court rejects anti-corruption probe plea against Pinarayi

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress in Kerala seemed to have suffered a political and legal setback after an anti-corruption court here on Monday found little merit in party MLA Mathew Kuzhalnadan's accusation that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his daughter, Veena Vijayan, had illegally benefited from the State government's "mining lease concessions" to a Kochi-based mining firm in 2016.

He had initially approached the Special Vigilance Court here, saying the Vigilance department had refused to probe financial transactions between Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd. (CMRL) and Ms. Veena's company Exalogic.

Mathew Kuzhalnadan

It summarily threw out Mr. Kuzhalnadan's plea for a court-monitored vigilance probe into his claim that the company had contracted Ms. Veena's IT consultancy for a sizeable monthly retainer as a *quid pro quo* for the government's nod for acquiring "excess land" to quarry for rare minerals in Alappuzha district in contravention of Centre norms.

The court reportedly found some merit in the VACB's argument that the litigation seemed politically motivated.

The CPI(M) said the verdict had laid bare the "Congress-right wing media-Central government" conspiracy to defame the Chief Minister and the CPI(M) by weaving a politically motivated yarn spun from malicious lies and far-fetched conspiracy theories.

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Time to talk

T.N., Kerala should discuss dam safety; legal recourse must be the last resort

Tamil Nadu's latest application in the Supreme Court of India on the Mullaperiyar dam row shows that even 10 years after the Court's decisive judgment allowing water to be stored till 142 ft. from the previously reduced 136 ft., several issues with Kerala still remain unresolved. In a rejoinder to Kerala's reply in a case filed by an activist, Tamil Nadu, the beneficiary-owner State, has accused Kerala, where the dam is located, of "crying foul" about the safety of the 129-year-old structure, while at the same time "wilfully obstructing" work essential for its maintenance. Despite the constitution of three panels, i.e., a Supervisory Committee (which was reconstituted by having a technical member from each State in June 2022) and two sub-committees (one of which is under the National Executive Committee of the National Disaster Management Authority) to ensure a high level of preparedness to face any disaster related to the dam, no one is any closer to finding a solution to the pending issues. Tamil Nadu's grievance is that the reconstituted Supervisory Committee, despite having powers under the Dam Safety Act, 2021, had "miserably failed" to ensure that Kerala and its instrumentalities permit and facilitate dam strengthening and other related works. Tamil Nadu has also been pressing for the early completion of a comprehensive dam safety evaluation within five years, by December 30, 2026, as stipulated under the 2021 law.

But despite unresolved issues, judicial intervention has seen the adoption of rule curve, a tool in decision-making for smooth operation of the dam's shutters, especially during floods, and the gate operation schedule, notwithstanding Kerala's reservations. Apart from the dam-related issues, the proposal of a mega car parking project of the Kerala government is a matter of litigation. The conclusion of the Survey of India that the project site is outside the leased area has been disputed by Tamil Nadu. As for Kerala, dam safety has been its primary concern and it wants to proceed cautiously. It is time that the two State governments, which enjoy good relations, resumed bilateral negotiations to find a solution to pending problems while retaining their liberty to adopt legal recourse. Courts take their own time to arrive at their conclusion, even though Tamil Nadu has a more favourable track record with the Supreme Court than the other State on Mullaperiyar, going by the 2006 and 2014 judgments. As water and dam safety can be used by some elements to arouse emotions, the political leadership in both States should be proactive in thrashing out the differences. The proposed talks, even in the event of not leading to any major breakthrough, may at least provide both States an opportunity to appreciate each other's position better and leave no room for vested interests to vitiate the atmosphere.

Twin towers

China dominated in both men's and women's team events in badminton

China has underlined its badminton supremacy by clinching the Thomas and Uber Cup titles at home in Chengdu. The Asian powerhouse repeated its feat of 2012 – to win both the men's and women's crowns in the same year. The vanquished finalist in both categories was another highflyer, Indonesia, losing 1-3 in the men's division and 0-3 in the women's. With less than three months left for the Paris Olympics, the twin successes marks China out as the clear favourite. Of the two, the men's victory will taste sweeter. After winning five straight times from 2004 to 2012, the heavyweight secured just one trophy from the five subsequent editions. At Bangkok in 2022, it did not even make the podium. But led by World No. 2 Shi Yu Qi – who won all six of his singles matches – China took home the top prize for the 11th time in history. For the women, it was about overcoming the blip of losing to South Korea in the 2022 summit clash. Leading into this year's competition, China had won 10 of the previous 13 Uber Cups. And with four players in the singles top-8 and three pairs in the doubles top-5, it bulldozed its way through to the title, winning 24 straight matches.

For India, the Thomas Cup acted as a stocktaking exercise ahead of the Olympics while the Uber Cup was used as a platform to blood the next generation. The experience in the former was bittersweet, for India was the defending champion but its campaign ended in the last-eight with a 1-3 defeat to China. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, Asian Games doubles gold medallists and among the favourites for Paris, lost two high-profile matches, to Indonesia in the last group-stage tie and China. However, H.S. Prannoy and Lakshya Sen turned in noteworthy performances. Against Indonesia, Prannoy defeated 2020 Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist and 2024 All England Open finalist Anthony Ginting, a confidence booster in an on-and-off season. Versus China, Lakshya overcame the 2023 All England champion Li Shi Feng, for the fourth time in five matches, furthering an uptick in form since the European swing in early March, ahead of his first-ever Olympic Games. The young Indian women's side emerged with a lot of credit even though it lost 0-5 to China in the last league contest and 0-3 to Japan in the quarters. It was baptism by fire for the likes of Anmol Kharb, Isharani Baruah, Tanvi Sharma and Ashmita Chaliha, a steep learning curve that will hold them in good stead.

A half-hearted climate change verdict

Ashish Kothari
is with Kalpavriksh

Shrishtee Bajpai
is with Kalpavriksh

The Supreme Court of India's extension of the constitutional rights to life and equality, to the right to be free of ill-effects of climate change, is a potential ray of hope in the midst of a gloomy ecological scenario. The world is staring at multiple collapses with historically unprecedented impacts on humans and the rest of life, as we race towards a 1.5° (and who knows how much more) Celsius rise in average temperatures. Governments across the planet have failed to act on the overwhelming scientific evidence of this scenario.

The judgment has significant potential to be converted into actions that can undo, mitigate, or help adaptation to the ill-impacts of the climate crisis. The Court's observations regarding the disproportionate share of impacts felt by already marginalised sections of society, can be the basis for much-needed corrective action.

The flaws in the judgment

But the judgment also contains deep flaws that could undermine such potential. We will not go into its orders regarding the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard, the threat to whose habitat by mega-energy in western India was the core matter of the petition. Here, we deal with the power and climate aspects. The Court states that harnessing solar and wind power is crucial to meet India's climate commitments, made by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties in 2021. These include net zero carbon emissions by 2070, generation of 500 GW by non-fossil fuel sources and a 50% share of total power generation to renewable energy by 2030. Any obstructions to these, the judgment says, will lead to greater coal-based production, with dire consequences for the climate.

The Court has tried to balance the need for land (and airspace) for solar and wind energy production in Rajasthan and Gujarat, with the imperative of protecting the bustard. In doing so, however, it has not interrogated several problematic aspects of India's proposed energy transition.

For one, the government includes, in 'non-fossil-fuel' and 'renewable' energy, large hydropower and nuclear plants. There is nothing benign about these. Construction of mega-dams in the Himalaya has caused destabilisation, biodiversity loss, and displacement of communities. Nuclear power has led to forced displacement, curtailment of democratic rights as it is shrouded in secrecy, and the fear of centuries of contamination by untreatable nuclear wastes.

Second, mega-solar and wind projects too have huge adverse impacts. For instance, the huge Pavagada Solar Park in Karnataka, has taken away grazing and agricultural land, and destroyed wildlife. In Changthang, Ladakh, a proposed 13 GW solar project will take up over 20,000 acres of fragile ecosystem, crucial for unique wildlife and nomadic pastoralism that produces the famous Pashmina wool.

> In M.K. Ranjitsinh and Ors. vs Union of India and Ors., the top court has not looked into several problematic aspects of India's proposed energy transition

Another one, proposed over 1,400 acres next to the Chhari Dhand Conservation Reserve in Kachchh, Gujarat, could destroy an important bird area as also the livelihoods of Maldhari pastoralists. Unfortunately, such renewable energy projects are excluded from environmental impact assessment (EIA) and clearance procedures, so their impacts are not even assessed.

Third, despite significant investment in renewable energy, the government is not reducing investments in coal. New coal mining blocks continue to be given a green signal, including in some of the country's most biologically diverse and socially sensitive (indigenous/ Adivasi) areas. In many of these, government agencies have enabled corporate entities, especially those closest to New Delhi's power corridors, to sidestep environmental laws.

Alternatives should have been considered

The Court's blanket acceptance of such an energy transition undermines its own assertion regarding a clean and healthy environment being a fundamental human right. To ensure such a right, it ought to consider the potential of alternatives to these mega-projects. For instance, rooftop and other decentralised renewable energy sources alone could yield over 600 GW. The Court itself observed: "Decentralized and distributed solar applications have brought substantial benefits to millions of people in Indian villages, addressing their cooking, lighting, and other energy needs in an environmentally friendly manner." If the Constitution's provisions for equality are to be met, these may fit the bill much more than mega-projects.

The Court could also have asked questions about how much of produced energy is wasted in inefficient transmission and use (for example, kitchen and other appliances), and luxury consumption. The absence of demand management in India's energy plans is shocking; its like any and all demand is justified. We need also to ask: what is the potential of power redistribution, from luxury consumption by the rich to poorer sections who do not get enough, thereby avoiding the need to produce that much new power?

While quoting climate-related judgments from other countries and some international agreements that India is party to, the Court has ignored others such as the increasing jurisprudence and the United Nations' declarations on rights of nature. One of the fastest-growing earth jurisprudence movements globally, it now has legal recognition in over 30 countries. It is a crucial part of just climate action, especially where led by indigenous peoples and other local communities to safeguard nature, and their habitats for present and future generations. In India, recognition of the rights of the Ganga and Yamuna by the Uttarakhand High Court in 2017 (stayed by the Supreme Court on a plea by Uttarakhand government that the order was not implementable), is also a potential bulwark against climate-damaging actions such as big dams and other mega-projects. Compliance with global treaties on human rights (some of which the Court quotes) and on indigenous people's rights, would require critical appraisal of mega-renewable energy projects as much as of fossil-fuel sources.

The Court could still expand the positive potential of the judgment, by adding these aspects to the mandate of the expert committee it has set up: whether there are alternative, less damaging ways (including decentralised renewable energy) of generating (or obtaining, through reduction of waste and luxury consumption of already available capacity) the power to be produced by mega-projects in Rajasthan and Gujarat, or non-electricity means of meeting the same energy demand.

The problem with the Indian model

There are also broader issues of what climate rights should actually mean. India's model of development, heavily focused on mega-industrial, infrastructural and extractive projects that cause deforestation and displacement of communities, is fundamentally violative of constitutional rights. When the government proposes an infrastructure project that will deforest 130 square kilometres of pristine rainforest and take up lands reserved for Scheduled Tribes in Great Nicobar, it clearly violates this line of the Court's judgment: "the tribal population in the Nicobar islands continues to lead a traditional life which is unconnected to and separate from any other part of the country or world. Indigenous communities often lead traditional lives .... The destruction of their lands and forests or their displacement from their homes may result in a permanent loss of their unique culture."

If the Court were to take such observations to their logical conclusion, and achieve the positive potential of declaring climate as a fundamental right, it should be directing the government to re-examine such projects. If it does, the judgment would have provided grounds for some fundamental shifts towards real sustainability and justice. If not, it has only reinforced the ecologically flawed, undemocratic and socially disruptive path to tackle climate change that the Government of India has been promoting.

The views expressed are personal

Getting to a new level in India's online gaming sector

Amar Patnaik
is a former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, from Odisha and an advocate by profession. He was a CAG bureaucrat

The Prime Minister's vision to establish India as a prominent global gaming hub has received renewed attention as he engaged with seven of the top gamers in the country. Spending a day with them, in April 2024, he discussed the trajectory of the gaming industry and sought to understand the challenges they encounter, particularly on the nuanced distinction between skill gaming and gambling (game of chance) – it could pave the way for a more conducive and forward-looking regulatory environment. The online gaming industry forms a critical part of the Digital India vision and initiative. Some of the key takeaways from the discussion included the opportunity offered by the increasing number of games based on Indian mythology and the scope to encourage the participation of women, besides fostering innovation. The players also highlighted the issue around the perception of gaming as a career in India.

Rapid growth

The online gaming industry in India has seen a rapid expansion of 28% CAGR between FY20 and FY23. Projections indicate further growth to ₹33,243 crore by FY28, with a sustained 15% CAGR. This sector not only attracts significant foreign and domestic investments but also generates substantial direct and indirect employment. Leveraging India's IT prowess, the industry holds natural potential for India. Notably, while the size of the global gaming industry crossed $300 billion in 2021 – more than the combined markets for the movie and music industry – the online gaming segment in India constitutes 1.1% of the global online gaming revenue. Thus, the potential for growth is enormous.

Not only is online gaming a multi-billion opportunity for Indian start-ups but it can also form an important part of 'India Techade' and the goal of a $1 trillion digital economy. The sector has witnessed an array of positive developments, including the establishment of the Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comic and Extended Reality taskforce by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the identification of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology as the nodal ministry, the introduction of a series of regulations through the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, and clarification around the ambiguity concerning tax deduction at source on winnings.

> There is much potential in India to shape the future of the gaming industry

All these measures have provided a sense of clarity and certainty in terms of a policy framework for all online gaming startups. This will go a long way in fostering innovation that is being powered by young Indians.

Issues that need scrutiny

Nevertheless, there are unresolved issues that require the attention of the government to enhance regulatory clarity. Primarily, despite the provision of self-regulatory bodies within the IT Rules of 2021 intended to regulate the industry, the effective implementation of these rules is pending, thus nullifying their intended impact. In an industry driven by innovation and fast-evolving technology, the role of self-regulation is crucial. NITI Aayog's discussion paper with draft guiding principles for the online fantasy gaming sector also proposed a self-regulatory model of governance with a self-regulatory organisation at its helm.

Further, recent revisions in taxation have placed the industry, particularly startups, in a precarious position. During the Goods and Services Tax Council meeting in July 2023, the Council decided to enforce a tax rate of 28% on the total face value of bets (effective October 1, 2023) regardless of whether the activity is classified as a game of skill or chance. Before this, online gaming firms in India were subjected to an 18% GST rate since the introduction of the indirect tax system in July 2017. While this measure has resulted in an initial uptick in tax revenue for the government, it raises concerns about the industry's sustainability in the long term and its consequential impact on jobs being created in this sector.

Soft power

By remedying these deficiencies, India stands at a distinctive juncture to emerge as a prominent global gaming hub. Another advantage lies in tapping India's rich cultural heritage (stories, legends, and folklore). With an increasing number of games inspired by Indian mythology, there is a unique opportunity to cater to domestic and international audiences.

Furthermore, there is a concerted effort to encourage the participation of women in the gaming industry, fostering diversity and inclusivity. As perceptions about gaming as a viable career option evolve, India stands to benefit from a growing pool of talented individuals driving innovation and pushing boundaries in the gaming landscape.

India stands at the threshold of a transformative era in the gaming industry. By fostering an enabling environment for skill gaming, promoting diversity and inclusion, and capitalising on its rich cultural narratives, India can not only realise its vision of a $1-trillion digital economy but also shape the future of gaming on a global scale.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tirade continues

It is most unfortunate that the Prime Minister is continuing to talk in a communally disturbing manner while on the electoral trail. Instead of addressing livelihood issues, he is harping on emotional and provocative rhetoric. The economic disparity in India is phenomenally stark and the oppressed are still struggling to make both ends meet. Can any political party dare to snatch the reservation quotas of the STs, SCs and OBCs and gift them to the minorities? Why does the Prime Minister ungracefully malign those who did not participate in the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir?

Abdul Kader,
Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu

Kejriwal arrest

It is a relief that the Supreme Court of India is considering granting interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal. Granting interim bail will enable him to campaign for the parliamentary elections to be held in Delhi and in Punjab. To grant bail pending trial would be in conformity with the true democratic spirit even more so when he is a political leader holding high office. It was Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer who said, "bail is the rule and jail, the exception". It should be remembered that the offence is yet to be proven. Repeatedly denying Mr. Kejriwal bail does not speak well of the judiciary. It only proves what the Opposition is saying — that there are political overtones in his arrest and the government is autocratic.

N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

CSK scores

No doubt, Chennai Super Kings was able to turn the tables against Punjab Kings at Dharamshala ('Sport', May 6). Thankfully, Ravindra Jadeja regained his mojo. Incidentally, we feel Rachin Ravindra is a better player than Moeen Ali. Shivam Dube seems to have slackened in his efforts to score runs for CSK.

Vinay Mahadevan,
Chennai

On NEET

My daughter wrote her NEET at The Scad College of Engineering and Technology, Cheranmahadevi, Tirunelveli. In her hall (MB219), the invigilators collected the answer sheets by 5 p.m. They told students that the exam is for three hours, and that 20 minutes is for them to process the answer sheets. Distressed children scrambled to answer the remaining questions.

Mothi Paul,
Madurai

The secularism of Indian science

Jacob Koshy

Last month, a sunbeam reignited a debate on the role of science and religion in Indian society. The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Abhay Karandikar, posted on X on April 17 (Ram Navami) that the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) had played a "crucial role" in the 'surya tilak' project in the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The 'surya tilak' was a beam of sunlight focused precisely on the forehead of Ram Lalla. The IIA, experts in designing mirrors and lenses to capture light from celestial bodies and galaxies in their telescopes, helped design a system of lenses and mirrors that manipulated the light into falling on the desired spot, he said. The IIA calculations will also account for the differing dates of Ram Navami every year, as the date is determined by the lunisolar calendar, and ensure a precise 'surya tilak', he added.

Primary objections

Some scientists were perturbed by this. Their first objection was that a college-level student could have designed this system and therefore there was no need to involve India's leading astrophysicists and astronomers.

The more serious gripe was that involving the IIA, an autonomous body under the DST, in a religious ceremony impugned on the Constitution's commitment to 'scientific temper.' While a Nehruvian coinage, the idea of scientific temper stretches back to the reformist ideas of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, P.C. Ray, and later, in independent India, to Satish Dhawan, Abdur Rahman, and P.M. Bhargava – all scientists and technology heads of some of India's preeminent scientific institutions. This principle underlines a general commitment to rational investigation and evidence-based thinking, but from Ram Mohan Roy's era to the present, it surfaces in the Indian public discourse particularly when science rubs up against religious practice. In the last two decades, proposals to introduce Vedic astrology in the college curricula and suggestions that ancient Indians flew airplanes, for example, have fomented discussions on scientific temper.

What is curious about the recent turn of events is that the IIA was not the only scientific institution involved in Ayodhya. The Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), a laboratory under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), another state-funded research institution, was closely involved in aspects relating to the structural integrity of the temple. In fact, it was the CBRI that set up the 'surya tilak' system. However, there have been no objections regarding its participation. The inference, then, is that either the CBRI's expertise doesn't encompass the 'scientific' or that it is the association of astronomers and astrophysicists with a religious event that is problematic. As temples of yore, too, incorporated ingenious design practices to manipulate sunlight, craftsmanship and engineering have always been viewed as independent of religion.

An accommodative version

Astronomy, astrophysics, and space shuttles are linked to the movements of the planetary bodies and are thus linked to the European origin story of the 'scientific revolution'. The Roman Catholic dogma of geocentricism was dislodged by the sun-centric re-imagination of the universe by Copernicus and Galileo; this led to the gestation of modern science. However, this radicalism of European science is alien to the Indian context, which has historically been accommodative of India's diverse religiosity.

The most salient example of this was an attempt by a scientific committee constituted by Jawaharlal Nehru and led by the eminent astrophysicist Meghnad Saha, to put India's 30-odd local calendars (*panchangas*) on a more scientific footing. The Calendar Reform Committee, as it was called, undertook a detailed analysis of not only the time-keeping mechanics of Indian calendars but also dove deep into the history of calendars of nearly every civilization. The Indian National Calendar, a product of the committee's report in 1956, corrected the anomalies by adding leap years, ensuring months had only 30 or 31 days, and defining Indian Standard Time. Despite being enforced by an Act of Parliament, only the last of these has been adopted into everyday life. Today, except for government gazettes, there is no trace of this Gregorian-scale innovation, and a plethora of religious and secular 'new years' still proliferate. The Calendar, while attempting to correct tradition, took pains to retain Indianness. As per this Calendar, the present is Vaisakha 1946. The makers specified that it would be useful for astrologers to calculate religious festivals.

Had the DST only turned to the Positional Astronomy Centre (PAC), a department of the India Meteorological Department and set up as a consequence of the Calendar committee report, it wouldn't have needed the IIA. The PAC annually releases a document that lists the public holidays, dates of a galaxy of festivals, the position of the sun and moon and key planets through the year to help both astronomers and astrologers.

Along with funding research in commonly understood scientific disciplines, the DST has funded SATYAM (Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation), where, to date, all the scientific research hasn't revealed anything that isn't already known about yoga and meditation, and the Scientific Validation and Research on Panchgavya, which is led by the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi and is meant to investigate the medicinal potency of cow's milk, dung, urine, ghee, and curd. Much like how Indian secularism is accommodative of all religions unlike the European separation of church and state, Indian science, when at odds with religion, has opted to be tempered.

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Science in India has historically been accommodative of the country's diverse religiosity

Playing to the gallery

Parties need to exercise restraint while talking of reservation for Muslims

STATE OF PLAY

Syed Mohammed
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The question of reservation for Muslims has once again become a polarising issue in the country, especially in Telangana. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has strongly opposed reservation for Muslims. Days after he referred to Muslims as "*ghuspeti* (infiltrators)" and "those who produce many children," Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared at a public meeting in Zaheerabad that reservation for Muslims, at the expense of reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), will never happen in his lifetime.

Reservation for Muslims has been a contentious issue ever since its introduction in undivided Andhra Pradesh by the Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR)-led Congress government in 2004. Those who oppose such reservation argue that it is based on religion and therefore unconstitutional, while those who favour it say it is accorded on the basis of backwardness of Muslims.

Originally fixed at 5% in education and employment, reservation for Muslims was determined using Census data and was based on the community's socioeconomic status. The Backward Classes Welfare Department, in addition to the existing categories of A, B, C, and D, created a fifth category, E, of socially and educationally backward Muslims to accommodate them. This category encompasses 14 communities such as Achchukattalavandlus, Attar Saibulus, Dhobi Muslims, Faqeers, Siddis, Hajjams (barber), and Shaiks. Vocational

Muslim communities such as the Laddafs were already included in category B (vocational).

In 2005, the YSR government passed an ordinance which was later replaced by a law providing 5% reservation for Muslims, but this was struck down by the Andhra Pradesh High Court as unconstitutional. The State government appealed against the verdict in the Supreme Court and a Bench issued a stay on the High Court order.

Following the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) promised to increase the quota from 4% to 12%, in proportion to the State's Muslim population (12.68%). The TRS constituted a Commission of Inquiry to study the socioeconomic conditions of Muslims. The Commission toured the districts of Telangana, interacted with the public, and gathered data and evidence from various sources, including the National Sample Survey Office, to make the case for increasing reservation for Muslims to 12%. Its report in 2016 also sought to evaluate the compatibility of these proposed reservations for Muslim communities and castes with the 11 criteria laid down in the *Indra Sawhney* case.

In 2017, the TRS passed a Bill to increase reservation for STs to 10% and Muslims to 12%. While this Bill received support from the Congress and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), it was opposed by the BJP. It was sent for the President's Assent.

Over the years, the BJP has continued to criticise the promise of 12% reservation for Muslims and described it as unconstitutional, religion-based, and an attempt to indulge in vote bank politics. Last year, Home Minister Amit Shah said in Chevella that the "BJP government in the State will scrap all such unconstitutional reservations if voted to power in the next Assembly elections". So, the party's campaign against the issue in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls is not an isolated case.

Mr. Modi's stance has invoked criticism from Hyderabad parliamentarian Asaduddin Owaisi. The AIMIM chief and his brother Akbaruddin Owaisi have contended that reservation for Muslims was accorded not on the basis of religion but backwardness. He has implied that the BJP and Mr. Modi are against the welfare of the community. Interestingly, the BJP's ally, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which is contesting both the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, has batted for the continuation of reservation for Muslims.

This issue seeks to play to the gallery and create a sense of resentment among SCs, STs, and OBCs at the expense of Muslims. Muslims have been demonised these elections, as seen in various speeches and in the BJP4Karnataka's recent post on X which has not been taken down and has garnered 8.9 million views so far. The post shows Muslims benefiting from reservation and dispossessing SCs, STs, and OBCs from a nest. It is imperative that political parties exercise restraint in their comments on the issue until the apex court delivers its verdict.

India's press freedom has rapidly declined in recent years

According to the press freedom index, India is currently ranked 159 out of the 180 nations analysed

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

India is ranked 159 out of the 180 nations considered in the 2024 edition of the press freedom index, published by the organisation Reporters Without Borders. While this is a marginal improvement from last year, India's performance in the recent past has been consistently poor.

Chart 1 shows India's ranking in the press freedom index over the years. It is important to note that India has been ranked over 100 since 2003, which means that press freedom has been poor for a very long time. However, press freedom has eroded rapidly in recent years, with India being ranked 161 out of 180 nations last year, the lowest ever for the country. In the 2024 index, its ranking improved by two places to 159.

According to the index, press freedom in India is currently comparable to that of the occupied Palestinian territories; the UAE, an absolute monarchy; Turkey, a flawed democracy; and Russia, an authoritarian regime.

Table 2 shows the 2024 press freedom rankings of select countries. This year too, the Scandinavian countries – Norway, Denmark, and Sweden – were the best performers, while Eritrea, Syria, and Afghanistan were the worst. Among the BRICS countries (the old list), Brazil and South Africa enjoy greater press freedom than India, whereas China and Russia are ranked lower. Among South Asian nations, except Bangladesh, all the other countries rank better than India in the latest list.

While India's press freedom has eroded in recent years, the slide has been steeper in many other countries. But many countries have shown a record increase too. **Table 3** lists the biggest losers and gainers in the press freedom rankings of 2024, compared with 2019. Bhutan was ranked 80 in 2019 and slid to 147 in 2024, showing the biggest decline. Hong Kong and Afghanistan followed. On the other hand, the Central African Republic, Timor-Leste, and Montenegro recorded the biggest increases.

Italy and Argentina, which belong to the set of countries where press freedom rankings have dropped in the last five years, were discussed in detail in the report. Argentinian President Javier Milei's decision to shut the public press agency Telam is a "worrisome symbolic act," the report says. In Italy, a member of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's coalition government is trying to acquire news agency AGI. Despite improvements in its score, Greece has been criticised over its continued failure to deal with a scandal around wiretapping journalists by the intelligence service and the murder of veteran crime reporter Giorgos Karaivaz in 2021.

Notably, the *Wall Street Journal* has announced that it will shift its Asia headquarters from Hong Kong to Singapore, in a letter sent to staff and seen by AFP. The U.S. newspaper said its decision comes after other foreign firms have reconsidered their operations in the financial hub. Hong Kong authorities this year introduced a new national security law, which critics say expanded the city's powers to prosecute dissidents and was scaring away foreign businesses. This law expands on a national security law implemented by China in 2020 to quell the huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests that swept Hong Kong in 2019.

In Israel, Al Jazeera went off air on Sunday after the Benjamin Netanyahu government shut it down following a long-running feud. The Qatar-based channel decried the move as "criminal". Israel's press enjoys less freedom in 2024 compared to 2019: the country's ranking dropped to 101 from 88.

With inputs from AFP and Reuters

The shaky fourth pillar

The data for the charts are sourced from Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index

Table 2: The table lists the 2024 press freedom rankings of select countries

Country	Rank
Norway	1
Denmark	2
Sweden	3
South Africa	38
Nepal	74
Brazil	82
Maldives	106
Ethiopia	141
Bhutan	147
Sri Lanka	150
Pakistan	152
Palestine	157
Turkey	158
India	**159**
UAE	160
Russia	162
Bangladesh	165
Egypt	170
China	172
Iran	176
Afghanistan	178
Syria	179
Eritrea	180

Chart 1: The chart shows India's ranking in the press freedom index over the years

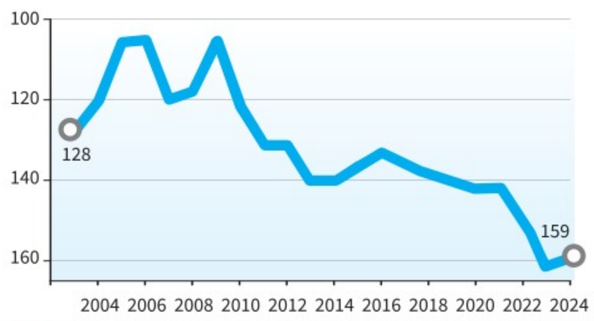


Table 3: The table lists the biggest losers and gainers in the press freedom rankings of 2024, compared with 2019

Country	Rank 2024	Rank 2019	Difference in rank
Central African Republic	76	145	+69
Timor-Leste	20	84	+64
Montenegro	40	104	+64
Eswatini	85	147	+62
Mauritania	33	94	+61
Moldova	31	91	+60
North Macedonia	36	95	+59
Gabon	56	115	+59
Bulgaria	59	111	+52
Burundi	108	159	+51
Thailand	87	136	+49
Republic of Congo	69	117	+48
Qatar	84	128	+44
Ukraine	61	102	+41
Peru	125	85	-40
Georgia	103	60	-43
Lesotho	122	78	-44
Senegal	94	49	-45
Madagascar	100	54	-46
Tunisia	118	72	-46
Nicaragua	163	114	-49
Burkina Faso	86	36	-50
El Salvador	133	81	-52
Papua New Guinea	91	38	-53
Afghanistan	178	121	-57
Hong Kong	135	73	-62
Bhutan	147	80	-67

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 7, 1974

Southern CMs to discuss food zone revival

Cochin, May 6: The Centre proposes to convene a conference of the Chief Ministers of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka after the next kharif crop to discuss the question of revival of the Southern food zone. "We have to examine various issues before taking a final decision in the matter," Mr. A.P. Shinde, Union Minister of State for Food and Agriculture, said at a news conference here to-day. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh with their vast surpluses could help in feeding the "highly deficit" Kerala and "we will certainly exert all the pressure on these two States to share their rice surpluses with Kerala." In this connection, he said that the reported protest of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister against the lifting of the ban on the movement of coarse grains was "unjustifiable." The Centre lifted the ban as procurement of coarse grains was not made in the Southern States, he added. The Minister said that Kerala could get some quantity of the marginal surplus rice left with the rice producing States of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab where procurement for the Central pool had just been completed. He said that he had suggested to the Kerala Chief Minister, Mr. C. Achutha Menon, to approach the State Governments for purchase of rice on State account. This would be definitely outside the Central allotment "and we will allow inter-State movement of food grains purchased on Government to Government level," Mr. Shinde said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 7, 1924

Colonization scheme

The "Statesman" writes: Although the scheme for the colonisation of the Andamans by Anglo-Indians has not been in operation long enough to justify the statement that it is an absolute failure, reports received from Port Blair indicate that the settlers are not doing as well as was hoped, and that if the colony is to continue to exist, it must receive more help from outside sources. Such help can only come from the community to which the settlers belong, for neither the Government, which presented the land, nor the Ex Services Association, which made a large grant of money to start the experiment can be expected to do any more.

From Page One

All set for third phase of polls for 93 seats today

EVMs to be used in a remote island town in Kamrup, Assam, being loaded in a country boat on the banks of the Brahmaputra. RITU RAJ KONWAR

In Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav is fighting to retain the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat.

May 7 will also decide the fate of former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah will cast their vote in Ahmedabad city under the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat.

In 2019, the BJP won 72 of the 93 seats while the Congress won just five. In Karnataka, the BJP had swept all 14 seats, defeating the Congress and the JD(S), which were in alliance and ruling the State then.

However, this time, the BJP is wary of a sexual assault case involving its Karnataka ally JD(S)' candidate Prajwal Revanna.

After this phase, voting will be completed in 283 out of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha. The next four phases will be on May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1. The counting of votes is on June 4.

SC seeks report as T.N., ED spar over case

The court also took exception to the long hours the ED made the officials remain in its office. "You (ED) cannot do that. Do not keep them waiting, they have to tend to their districts... Do not harass them unnecessarily," Justice Trivedi told the ED. The ED counsel said it would convey the court's displeasure to the agency.

The court posted the case for further hearing after the summer vacation in July.

In the previous hearing on April 2, the court had ordered the four Collectors of Vellore, Ariyalur, Karur and Trichy to be present in person before the ED on April 25 while listing the case for hearing on May 6.

The April 2 hearing had seen the court castigate the four Tamil Nadu District Collectors for failing to appear in person in response to a summons issued to them by the anti-money laundering body.

The court had insisted on the Collectors' personal presence at the ED office despite submissions made by both the Tamil Nadu government and the officials that they had written to the agency expressing their inability to appear in person as the general elections in Tamil Nadu were due on April 19 and they needed more time to collect the information sought by the Central agency about sand mining sites in their respective districts. The Collectors had explained that the information sought was not in their offices, but had to be collected from other branches of the district administration, verified and collated to be presented before the ED.

However, the court refused to accept the Collectors' explanation. Justice Trivedi had said their conduct showed scant respect for the top court's order on February 27 to appear in person before the ED on whatever date it summoned them.

Justice Trivedi had explained that 50(2) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act empowered the ED to summon "any person" whose attendance was considered necessary for giving evidence or production of records in the course of "any investigation or proceeding" under the statute.

Soren seeks SC to urgently hear appeal

Mr. Sibal said the rights of Mr. Soren were being trampled upon.

Chief Justice Chandrachud informed Mr. Sibal that the plea for interim bail was already coming up for hearing on May 7. Mr. Sibal said his appeal against the High Court judgment should also be listed along with the bail plea.

The bail plea had come up earlier on April 29 before a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta. The Bench had issued notice to the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) while giving the Jharkhand High Court liberty to pronounce its judgment on Mr. Soren's petition challenging his arrest.

The High Court's judgment, on May 3, refused to quash the case against Mr. Soren, while observing that the former Chief Minister could not wriggle out of the "mess" by invoking the spectre of political vendetta.

Mr. Soren was arrested on January 31 after he resigned as the Chief Minister. The ED is probing the alleged "huge amounts of proceeds of crime generated by manipulation of official records by showing dummy sellers and purchasers in the guise of forged/bogus documents to acquire huge parcels of land having value in crores".

SC to urgently hear petitions on Uttarakhand forest fires

The petitions note 90% of the fires in the recent outbreak have been 'man-made', highlight the extent of forest fires in Uttarakhand over the years; 20 fresh cases and one death on Monday

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to urgently hear on Wednesday petitions on Uttarakhand forest fires even as petitioners said 90% of the blazes were "man-made".

A Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai instructed the petitioners, including senior advocate Rajiv Dutta, to inform the *amicus curiae*, advocate K. Parameshwar, about the hearing.

The Uttarakhand government, represented by its Deputy Advocate-General, said he would be present for the hearing and sought permission to file a status report by the next hearing.

Mr. Dutta said the situation was "shocking". "There is carbon flying all over the place," he submitted. He said the Uttarakhand government had actually filed a report in the National Green Tribunal (NGT) claiming the number of incidents of fires was "going down".

Justice Gavai said the *amicus* could also have the Central Empowered Committee in on the next hearing.

News reports note that 351 cases related to 'man-made' forest fires were registered in the past six months. PTI

900 fires in six months

News reports quote officials saying there had been over 900 incidents of fires in the past six months, damaging at least 1,100 hectares of forest land in Uttarakhand. Reports say that 351 cases related to "man-made" forest fires were registered, implicating 59 named individuals and 290 unidentified suspects.

Since November 1, 2023, a total of 575 forest fire incidents across nearly 690 hectares were officially cited in the State.

The petitions highlight the extent of forest fires in Uttarakhand.

Strict action

Uttarakhand recorded 20 fresh cases of forest fire on Monday and one death due to forest fire with the demise of a 65-year-old woman from Pauri Garhwal.

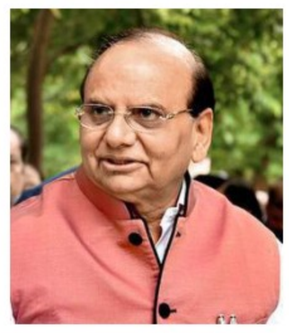
With the incidents of forest fires increasing every day, the State government announced that it would take action under the Gangster Act against those found to be repeatedly setting such fires. "Those found guilty of setting forests on fire will also be booked under Uttarakhand Public and Private Property Damage Recovery Act," said Director General of Police (DGP) Abhinav Kumar.

Meanwhile, on the orders of Chief Secretary Radha Raturi, the Range Officer of Jorasi (Almora Forest Division) was attached to the divisional office for negligence in controlling forest fire. Ms. Raturi also said that to control the raging forest fires, the government has deployed the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Indian Air Force choppers too were used to douse the fire in Pauri Garhwal.

She said the state was also coordinating with IIT Roorkee, which has been experimenting with cloud seeding, to use rainfall as a means to control the fires.

Delhi L-G wants NIA probe into AAP's 'Khalistani' funding

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI



V.K. Saxena

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena recommended a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday. The recommendation was based on a complaint made by the World Hindu Federation India (WHFI), which alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received political funding from the banned organisation 'Sikhs for Justice'.

This request comes a day before Mr. Kejriwal's bail hearing. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21 in connection with a money laundering case in the Delhi excise policy case and has been in judicial custody in Tihar jail since.

Responding to the recommendations, AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj said, "This is another big conspiracy against Mr. Kejriwal at the behest of the BJP." The BJP was in panic over fear of losing all the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, he said.

Sources in the Raj Niwas said the WHFI complaint said Mr. Kejriwal had allegedly received $16 million from extremist 'Khalistani' groups for espousing 'Pro-Khalistani' sentiments.

It referred to a video released by the U.S.-based pro-Khalistan advocate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, in which he claimed AAP received the money between 2014 and 2022.

It has been alleged that Mr. Kejriwal held close-door meetings with Khalistani leaders at Gurdwara Richmond Hills, New York, during his visit in 2014, and promised to facilitate the release of convicted terrorist Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar in return for substantial financial backing, Raj Niwas sources said.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva welcomed the recommendation.

Child dies in crude bomb explosion in West Bengal

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

A 11-year-old child was killed and two children were injured in a bomb explosion in West Bengal's Hooghly district on Monday. The injured children have been admitted to a State-run health facility and are said to be in a critical condition.

Locket Chatterjee, MP and BJP candidate for Hooghly, alleged that Trinamool Congress goons were involved in the incident, and sought an investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Rachana Banerjee, Trinamool's Hooghly candidate, expressed grief over the incident and said it had nothing to do with politics.

The National Commission of Child Rights has sought reports from the State government on similar incidents.

Girls perform better than boys in Class 10 and 12 exams of CISCE

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Girls have outshone boys in the Class 10 (ICSE) and 12 (ISC) results declared by the Council of Indian School Certificate Examinations in New Delhi on Monday.

While 99.47% (2,42,328) of the 2,43,617 candidates who appeared in the ICSE exam passed, 98.19% (98,088) of the 99,901 candidates who appeared passed in the ISC exam.

The pass percentage among girls was 99.65% (ICSE) and 98.92% (ISC). Boys attained a pass percentage of 99.31% (ICSE) and 97.53% (ISC).

As many as 1,289 students (0.53%) were unsuccessful in the ICSE and 1,813 (1.81%) in the ISC exam.

A total of 1,30,506 boys (53.57%) and 1,13,111 girls appeared (46.43%) in the ICSE exam, while 52,765 boys (52.82%) and 47,136 girls (47.18%) took the ISC exam.

Students and teachers celebrate after the announcement of the CISCE Class 10 results at a school in Gurugram. ANI

In Delhi, where 5,629 candidates (2,960 boys and 2,669 girls) appeared, the pass percentage is 99.88%, up by 0.2% from last year.

Up to 1,088 candidates with learning difficulties appeared in the ICSE examination of whom 98 obtained marks above 90%. Twelve of the 40 visually challenged students who appeared in the ICSE exam scored above 90%.

Similarly 236 candidates with learning difficulties appeared in the ISC exam of whom 18 candidates obtained marks above 90%. Two of the 11 visually challenged students who appeared in the ICSE obtained marks above 90%,

The best performing schools abroad for the ICSE were from Indonesia, Singapore and Dubai with a pass percentage of 100%.

As many as 15,026 Scheduled Caste candidates took the exam and achieved pass percentage of 99.11% and 8,255 Scheduled Tribe candidates took the exam and achieved a pass percentage of 98.39% in the ICSE.

The ICSE examination is conducted in 60 written subjects, of which 20 are Indian languages, 13 are foreign languages, and one classical language. The exam was held from February 21 to March 28 over 18 days.

Similarly, the ISC offered 47 written subjects of which 12 are Indian languages, four are foreign languages and two classical languages. The exam was held from February 12 to April 4, over 28 days.

Congress slams Centre over NEET 'paper leak'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding a clarification on Monday by the National Testing Agency (NTA) that reports of a question paper leak in the medical entrance exam, the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET-UG, were "baseless and without any ground", the Congress on Monday said that this trend has been going on for the past 10 years and that was why unemployment and corruption in jobs were the biggest issues of this election.

"Be it the students who dream of getting admission in college after passing 12th or the promising youth who are struggling for government jobs, the Modi government has become a curse for everyone," former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said in a post on X.

BJP harassing our social media team, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Professionals working in the Congress's social media department were being "harassed, questioned, intimidated and detained" by the police at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, the party alleged on Monday.

The Congress party's assertion came days after the Delhi Police's Special Cell arrested a national coordinator of the Congress's social media team for allegedly uploading and circulating a doctored video of Mr. Shah online.

Supriya Shrinate, heads of the party's social media department, claimed the BJP leaders were in a "panic" due to the prospect of a defeat in the election.

ED seizes ₹20 crore from residence of domestic help of Jharkhand Minister's aide

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday recovered ₹20 crore of "unaccounted-for cash" and some jewellery from the premises of the domestic help of Sanjiv Lal, personal secretary to Jharkhand Rural Development Minister Alamgir Alam. The haul was part of searches at multiple sites across Ranchi by the investigation agency that began on Monday morning.

Sources said that during questioning, Jahangir Alam – the domestic help – confessed that the money belonged to Mr. Lal.

As the cash amount was considerable, the ED was forced to employ a counting machine to wade through the notes.

A security guard with the cash seized from Jahangir Alam's house.

The Opposition BJP slammed the Congress and its allies over the ED seizures.

"The ED has recovered huge amounts of cash from the house of Congress Minister Alamgir Alam's close aide. The Congress loves cash, and they have stolen the hard-earned money of the people of Jharkhand. In the past four-and-a-half years, the JMM-Congress combine along with the RJD have looted Jharkhand and made it *Lootkhand*. It also proves that the ruling government wanted to misuse the money in the ongoing election," Amar Kumar Bauri, the Leader of the Opposition, said.

On his part, Mr. Alamgir Alam said, "Sanjeev Lal is my PS and he is government official and they are recruited on the basis of their experience. Before working with me, he was PS of two other Ministers as well. I cannot say much more about him. I know whatever the media knows and the ED is handling the investigation; I can only speak after the results come out."

Statements by INDIA bloc leaders against 'nation's interest': BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday said a series of statements made by leaders of the INDIA bloc was "against the nation's interest". It accused the Opposition of echoing the "voice of Pakistan", and asked people to beware of "traitors".

At a press conference held at the BJP's national headquarters in New Delhi, spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi slammed the Congress, citing Maharashtra Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar's remarks on the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's remarks that the attack on the Indian Air Force personnel in Jammu and Kashmir was a "poll stunt".

Mr. Trivedi alleged that Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, in a column for a Bangladesh newspaper, had referred to Kashmir as "Indian-administered-Kashmir".

Mr. Tharoor earlier clarified that he had never used such a term in any of his writings or statements anywhere. "It has been interpolated by the editors of the newspaper that my syndicated column appeared in. I disavow such language unequivocally, but have no control over what foreign newspaper editors do," he said on X.

Mr. Trivedi also took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the recovery of a huge amount of cash from the house of a domestic help allegedly linked to the Secretary of a Jharkhand Minister.

ELECTIONS 2024

Shah, Mamata lock horns over Sandeshkhali

Claiming that his party will win 30 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday targeted the Trinamool Congress on the Sandeshkhali issue.

"Even if those who committed atrocities in Sandeshkhali hide into the abyss, we will put them behind bars," Mr. Shah said.

He accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of shielding the accused at Sandeshkhali.

"Ms. Banerjee will have to go (out of power) from Bengal. Nobody can save her," the Home Minister said.

Hitting back Ms. Banerjee said, "You [BJP] have heaped disrespect, indignity to crores of mothers and sisters of Bengal. You offered them money to level charges. You should be ashamed of such an act."

Union Minister Amit Shah at a meet in Bardhaman-Durgapur on Monday. ANI

Cong. names two candidates for Himachal bypolls

With Himachal Pradesh getting ready for byelections to six Assembly constituencies and simultaneous Lok Sabha elections on June 1, the stage is set for a direct fight between the ruling Congress and the BJP. On Monday, the Congress announced its candidates for two more byelection seats — Lahaul-Spiti and Barsar.

Anuradha Rana, a district council (Zila Parishad) chairperson, will contest from the Lahaul-Spiti and Subash Chand from Barsar seat. Ms. Rana has been pitted against the BJP's Ravi Thakur, while Mr. Chand will take on Inder Dutt Lakhanpal.

The Congress has, so far, declared candidates for five of the six seats in Himachal Pradesh facing bypolls; it is yet to name a candidate for the Dharamshala seat.

"It is only NC candidates who are committing that if elected, their every deed will be against BJP's hate-mongering. We will fight for our rights

OMAR ABDULLAH
National Conference leader

Plaint against proposers of Nilesh Kumbhani

The Congress on Monday lodged a complaint seeking registration of an FIR against the three proposers of party's Lok Sabha candidate Nilesh Kumbhani. Mr. Kumbhani's nomination from Surat was rejected after the proposers claimed their signatures on the form were forged. PTI

"Be it wrestlers or daughters like Ankita Bhandari, PM didn't try to provide justice. BJP has protected those who commit crimes against women

NETTA D'SOUZA
Congress leader

NCBC chief appeals to OBCs to vote 'for national interest'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Amid low turnouts reported in the first two phases of voting, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) on Monday issued an appeal on behalf of its Chairperson, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, asking all voters from Other Backward Class communities to step out and exercise their franchise in the remaining five phases of the Lok Sabha election.

In the appeal, Mr. Ahir points out that the 102nd Constitution Amendment in 2018 gave the commission its constitutional status, which has allowed it to work for the protection and promotion of constitutional rights of the backward classes.

The Chairperson added in his appeal that voters from all backward classes of the country should effectively participate in the Lok Sabha election and exercise their right to vote – "for the future of the current and coming generations, for the national interest, and to strengthen democracy".

Mr. Ahir told *The Hindu*, "This is a plain appeal to people to come out and vote. OBCs form one of the largest groups of voters across the country. As the Chairperson of the National Commission for OBCs, I have appealed to all of them to come out and vote."

The appeal from Mr. Ahir came in a press note from the commission, which issued it on a letterhead that asserted its status as a "Constitutional Body exercising powers of a Civil Court under Article 338B of the Constitution of India".

However, when asked, senior NCBC officials denied that this appeal was being issued by invoking powers as a civil court. "It is just the Chairperson making an appeal," one official said, insisting that it was usual practice to issue such press notes.

The official website and annual reports of the commission denote it as just a "Constitutional Body under Article 338B of the Constitution of India". Even in the official Rules of Procedure notified by the Centre, the commission is described as having powers of a civil court only in Forms I, II, and III – all of which have to do with proceedings related to investigations or inquiries.

A perusal of public records of NCBC notices from 2019 onwards showed that this particular letterhead has been used by the commission only in proceedings. None of these records show a press note being issued on this particular letterhead.

The NCBC has been in the spotlight for the last two weeks, ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi cited its work in Karnataka to accuse the Congress of purportedly giving away chunks of the OBC quota to Muslims.

CARTOONSCAPE | SOUMYADIP SINHA

In troubled waters, Polavaram voters continue to wait for project completion

Conceived in 1941, the project has a history of more than eight decades but eludes people even today; the ruling YSR Congress Party, and the Opposition Telugu Desam Party and its alliance partner Jana Sena Party have vowed to complete the project if voted to power in the May 13 poll

GROUND REPORT

G.V.R. Subba Rao
VIJAYAWADA

Amid the elections in Andhra Pradesh, the Polavaram water project has taken centre stage with the parties including the issue in their manifestos and promising to complete it if voted to power.

Both the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and the Opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and its alliance partner Jana Sena Party (JSP) have vowed to complete the project and set deadlines as well. The BJP did not release any State-specific manifesto, though it is an alliance partner of the TDP-JSP in Andhra Pradesh.

From the Ramapada Sagar project conceived in 1941 to Polavaram, the project has a history of more than eight decades but eludes the people even today. The ruling and Opposition parties, the State and the Centre resort to blame game and mudslinging over inordinate delay in its completion. Even as rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) is yet to be completed, the fate of the project hangs in the balance as a portion of the diaphragm wall was washed away in the 2019 and 2020 floods. It is still unclear how to proceed further on the diaphragm wall, and construct the main dam, the earth-cum-rockfill structure.

Now, the elections are slated to be held on May 13, and all eyes are on the Polavaram Assembly constituency, though it may not be a referendum on the governments or parties in the fray. The general mood of the public is that the TDP and YSRCP governments have played with the sentiments and lives of people, while the BJP at the Centre too is to blame. They have a reason: the R&R package is yet to be taken to a logical conclusion. A majority of Polavaram evacuees/project displaced families (PDFs) did not receive compensation and alternative houses were not provided to them.

A long wait: The Polavaram R&R colony at Taduvai in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 371 habitations in composite East and West Godavari districts were affected due to the project. K.V.S. GIRI

Compensation not paid

Both displaced tribal and non-tribal people recall that compensation was not paid to many of them though land was given to tribal people. They also recall the blame game between the YSRCP and the TDP and promises made by YSRCP president and Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy during his visit to Polavaram. Mr. Jagan Reddy promised to pay a compensation of ₹10 lakh per family, higher than the ₹6.86 lakh promised by the TDP government. But, neither ₹6.86 lakh nor ₹10 lakh was paid, they point out.

The YSRCP government said that the previous TDP government in its five years had paid compensation only to 3,073 persons and released ₹193 crore, while the Jagan Reddy government, in its three years, paid more – ₹1,773 crore to 10,330 persons. If it were the scene, for whom do they vote? The people, more particularly PDFs, in the constituency are divided, clueless, and have no other option. "On the one hand, we are receiving the benefits under various welfare schemes, on the other hand, the government has failed to pay compensation, complete housing and fulfil other obligations," says Nagaraj, a voter.

A total of 371 habitations in composite East and West Godavari districts were affected due to the project, and more than 1.05 lakh families were affected. As many as 23 villages in Polavaram mandal were vacated and villagers were shifted to the R&R colonies. For the PDFs from Velerupadu and Kukkunur mandal, the R&R colonies were constructed near Jangareddygudem town, which comes in the Chinthalapudi Assembly segment under the Eluru Lok Sabha constituency. More than 22,000 families were to be relocated at Challavarigudem (Taduvai colony). The government failed to complete all the houses. Interestingly, the housing for Rudramkota villagers, which submerges once the project was complete, did not start.

Most of the houses constructed for non-tribals were not occupied, and only about 300 families opted to shift to Taduvai Colony. Also, more than 1,300 people have preferred retaining their old address on voter IDs. "We are afraid of changing the address as we lose the nativity in Polavaram," says a senior citizen, who is relocated from Velerupadu.

Pouring out their woes, the residents point out that there were no proper roads and basic infrastructure. Only one RTC bus plies – once in the morning and again in the evening. The schools and hospital which were promised remain on paper. The R&R Colony falls under the Chintalapudi Assembly constituency. Leave alone the Eluru Lok Sabha constituency candidates, neither the Chintalapudi Assembly candidates nor the Polavaram candidates visited the colony so far. "The political parties are least bothered about evacuees. To whom do we have to vote? Why should we vote?", is a big question before them.

Andhra Pradesh Samagrabhivriddhi Adhyayana Vedika convener T. Lakshmi Narayana says lack of political will was one of the main reasons for the inordinate delay in the completion of the project.

Tribals are a majority with nearly 1.25 lakh voters, and Kapus, Kammas, and OBC communities together account for around one lakh voters. The Polavaram Assembly constituency is set to witness an intense battle of the ballot.

Andhra Pradesh will witness simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections on May 13.

In battle for Maharashtra, Assembly election, not Lok Sabha polls, will settle political scores

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar
MUMBAI

The battle for Maharashtra, considered the most hard-fought in the Lok Sabha election, is being seen only as the precursor to the all-out war of the Assembly election to be held in less than six months after the ongoing election.

The political upheaval in Maharashtra began after the Assembly election in 2019, when the Shiv Sena walked out of the *Mahayuti*, or the NDA, in the State and formed the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government with unlikely allies, the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

That unlikely combination of allies in the MVA redrew the political geography of the State dramatically, upending support bases and creating grudge matches that are yet to reach their conclusion.

Two years ago, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, along with a large number of Shiv Sena MLAs and MPs, split the party and brought down the MVA government. He got the Chief Minister's chair, the party's bow-and-arrow symbol, and the party name Shiv Sena (Balasaheb Thackeray).

A year before the Lok Sabha election, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar also split his party, the NCP, rebelling against his uncle and senior leader Sharad Pawar. With the party symbol going to the Ajit Pawar faction, the senior Pawar is in the same situation as in 1999 when he launched the NCP – a new party just weeks before election.

Curtain raiser: Supporters of Maha Vikas Aghadi take part in an rally for the Lok Sabha elections, in Karad on Sunday. PTI

Hard bargain

These splits have led to hard bargaining within the alliances over seat-sharing for the Lok Sabha election.

In the MVA, the most number of seats were bagged by the Shiv Sena (UBT), led by Uddhav Thackeray, which will be contesting 21 seats. The Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar) will contest 10, and the Congress 17.

The seat-sharing was not without pains, with the Congress giving up its claim on Sangli for the Shiv Sena (UBT) and on Bhiwandi for the NCP (Sharad Pawar). This hard bargaining is clearly aimed at the extrapolation of claims when it comes to Assembly seats later.

Again, despite giving in, the Congress is not without skin in the game in Sangli, as Vishal Patil, grandson of former Chief Minister Vasantdada Patil, is standing as a rebel candidate for the seat. The Shiv Sena (UBT) has fielded the two-time winner of "Maharashtra Kesari" wrestling title Chandrahar Patil.

In the *Mahayuti*, the BJP is contesting 28 seats, the NCP (Ajit Pawar) four, the Rashtriya Samaj Party supported by the NCP (Ajit Pawar) one, and the surprise in the pack, the Shiv Sena (Shinde) 15. Mr. Shinde's hard bargaining when no one expected to see him get into double digits in the seat share, is again aimed at better claims on seats for the Assembly election.

Both factions of the Shiv Sena and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP have fought for and got these seats not just to express claims later, but also to make sure that the new party symbols Shiv Sena (UBT)'s flaming torch, and NCP (Sharad Pawar)'s man blowing "turha" or traditional trumpet, are by then popularised in these areas right on time for Assembly polls.

On the chess board of Maharashtra politics, where the game is moving at lightning speed, the Lok Sabha is just a semifinal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, fighting for his third tenure, is a big factor that can obscure a lot of local grudges and equations. For the final reckoning of the events let loose in 2019, however, the Assembly polls will have to be awaited, with the Lok Sabha polls an interregnum to put the set pieces in place.

Shah says BJP is not afraid of Opposition's vote bank

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

On the eve of the third phase of polling, BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday issued a statement on Muslims, saying the BJP is not afraid of their vote bank.

Mr. Shah said this while campaigning in Bihar.

He was referring to how the Congress and its allies skipped the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir to keep their vote bank happy.

"It was Lalu Prasad*ji* who had put L.K. Advani in jail in Samastipur during his rath yatra and opposed Ram Mandir. Lalu*ji*, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka were invited during the consecration ceremony of Ram Mandir but they did not turn up fearing to lose their vote bank. I hope you all are aware, who are their vote banks? You are not the vote bank, their vote bank is different, but we are not afraid of those vote banks," Mr. Shah said.

INBRIEF

Sharad Pawar advised rest after intense campaigning

The battle for Baramati has taken its toll on octogenarian Sharad Pawar. The Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief and former Union Minister cancelled his scheduled programmes for Monday after being advised rest. The 83-year-old, who has a sore throat, delivered a short public address on Sunday – the last day of campaigning for Baramati (in Pune district), which goes to the polls on Tuesday. The Baramati contest pits Mr. Pawar's daughter, incumbent MP Supriya Sule, against Sunetra Pawar, wife of Deputy CM and NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who is Sharad Pawar's nephew. Ms. Sule said there was no cause for worry and that Mr. Sharad Pawar was taking a break to rest.

HC grants two months' interim bail to Naresh Goyal

The Bombay High Court on Monday granted interim bail for two months to Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal in a money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). A single judge Bench of Justice N.J. Jamadar, pronounced the judgment, and said that Mr. Goyal would be released upon the payment of ₹1 lakh with sureties, in accordance with the court orders. Mr. Goyal was also asked to surrender his passport. Mr. Goyal is currently undergoing treatment for cancer at the Sir H.N. Reliance Private Hospital. His wife too has cancer.

Samajwadi Party appoints Shyam Lal Pal as its U.P. chief

The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Monday appointed Shyam Lal Pal as its Uttar Pradesh State unit president, replacing Naresh Uttam Patel who is contesting the election from the Fatehpur Lok Sabha constituency. Mr. Pal had previously been the party's State vice-president. "Shyam Lal Pal is appointed as the State head of the party to strengthen the organisation. Our outgoing State president is fighting the Lok Sabha polls; hence the appointment of a new chief was required. The appointment highlights our commitment to PDA [*Pichda*, Dalit and *Alpashankhyak*], meaning Backward Classes, Dalits, and minorities," Sunil Singh Yadav 'Sajan', the SP national spokesperson, said.

ED seizes gold worth over ₹14 crore in cyber fraud case

The Enforcement Directorate has seized 19.5 kg of gold worth over ₹14 crore from a bank locker linked to an alleged cyber criminal who is one of the masterminds of a syndicate that sent abroad about ₹4,978 crore raised through various cybercrimes and online gaming platforms during 2020-24. Accused Punit Kumar was arrested on his arrival at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi from Nepal on April 3. The locker was being maintained in his mother's name with a Ballabhgarh branch of Indian Bank in Haryana, the agency said on Monday. The ED probe is based on several FIRs registered in Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Chandigarh.

BJD, Congress loot to blame for Odisha's poverty, says PM

Modi exudes confidence that a BJP Chief Minister will take oath on June 10 in the State, which will then benefit from a double-engine government; he says the BJD's sunset is imminent

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Blaming the Biju Janata Dal government headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for poverty in Odisha despite abundant mineral resources, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the BJP would surely come to power in the State in the Assembly election as people would not spare the current regime for its "sins".

Launching an attack on the State government at a public meeting in Berhampur, Mr. Modi said, "For the first time, a double-engine government is going to be there in Odisha – one at the Centre and another in the State. Mark my words, the coming June 4 will be the expiry date for BJD government. On June 6, the BJP will decide its new Chief Minister. The oath-taking ceremony of the new BJP government will take place on June 10."

"I extend invitation to all people to the oath-taking ceremony of next BJP government in Odisha,"

Narendra Modi addressing a public meeting at Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency in Odisha on Monday. BISWARANJAN ROUT

said the PM. "In Odisha, the BJD's sunset is imminent, Congress has fallen apart and people are reassured by the BJP, which has come with new aspiration," he said.

"The Congress has ruled Odisha for 50 years while the BJD has been in power for the past 25 years. The State has huge water resources, fertile land, abundant mineral reserves and long coastline. Why have people of the rich Odisha remained poor? Who has committed the sin? The answer is the loot first by Congress and then BJD leaders," Mr. Modi charged.

"The middle-rung leaders of the BJD have become owners of big bungalows. Why do so many people resort to distress migration in the CM's own constituency? Why are doctors' posts lying vacant? Why do students drop out in middle of the schooling? There is no adequate cold storage facilities in Hinjili, the CM's Assembly constituency and no irrigation facility," he said.

Development funds

"There is no shortage of fund in our budget for Odisha's development. The Manmohan Singh government had given ₹1 lakh crore to Odisha during its 10 years of rule. Our government has given ₹3.5 lakh crore in the past 10 years. The BJD government either doesn't implement welfare programmes of the Central government or appropriates the programmes as its own. And above all, it indulges in huge corruption," he said.

"The BJD government implements the Centre's free rice scheme in its own name. Why did they resort to treachery? Because they have not done anything," he said.

He praised the Odisha BJP for bringing out a 'visionary' manifesto keeping in mind the future of youth, the health of elderly people and the welfare of farmers. "In States where BJP has got the opportunity to serve, the process of development picked up speed on an unprecedented scale. Tripura was destroyed by 30 years of rule by Communist and Congress governments. In 2018, people chose the BJP and impressed by its performance, people again brought the BJP government in Tripura," Mr. Modi said.

Congress will raise MGNREGS wage to ₹400, says Rahul

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Rahul Gandhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in Madhya Pradesh on Monday that his party, if elected to power in the Lok Sabha election, would increase the wage under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to ₹400 per day.

"The press says that MGNREGS ruins the people's habits. You do the labour and get paid for it but the media says your habits are getting ruined. But when the loans of billionaires get waived, they call that development. We have made up our mind that today you get ₹250 under MGNREGS, but after the elections you will get ₹400," Mr. Gandhi said, addressing a rally in Alirajpur in the Ratlam Lok Sabha constituency.

Later in the day, Mr. Gandhi also addressed a rally in Segaon in the Khargone Lok Sabha constituency.

Once again terming the ongoing election as being about saving the Constitution and reservation, the Congress leader alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) wanted to "change and finish" the Constitution.

"If the Constitution gets finished, all the rights you have got will disappear. You *jal, zameen aur jungle* (water, land and forest), and reservation and the public sector will all disappear, and only 22-25 people will rule India," Mr. Gandhi said.

"BJP leaders have clearly said that they will change this book (the Constitution) and keep it aside if they win the elections. This is why they had given the slogan of 400 seats (*abki baar, 400 paar*). Forget about 400, they won't even get 150 seats," he said, holding a copy of the Constitution.

Delhi High Court grants IS 'supporter' bail in UAPA case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court granted bail on Monday to an alleged Islamic State (IS) supporter charged under the anti-terror law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), saying his "fascination" with the banned terrorist organisation cannot be dubbed as his association with it.

The Bench said Ammar Abdul Rahiman, grandson of the late B.M. Idinabba, former Congress MLA from Karnataka, was highly radicalised and had downloaded pro-IS material and was accessing sermons of Muslim hardliners but that would not be enough to attract Section 38 [offence relating to membership of a terrorist organisation] and 39 [offence relating to support given to a terrorist organisation] of the UAPA.

The Bench said there was nothing to indicate that Mr. Rahiman, who was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on August 4, 2021 from Ullal in Mangaluru, made any endeavour to further disseminate the material.

"Merely because the mobile device of the appellant was found carrying incriminating material, including photographs of terrorist Osama bin Laden, jihad promotion, IS flags, etc. and he was also accessing lectures of hardliner/Muslim preachers would not be enough to brand him as a member of such terrorist organisation, much less his being acting in furtherance of its cause," the court said.

"Any curious mind can access and even download such content. That act by itself, to us, appears to be no crime," the Bench said, allowing him bail.

Amid row over fake video, EC warns parties against misuse of AI-based tools

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

EC has emphasised the need to uphold the integrity of the electoral process

Amid the row over the doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Election Commission of India on Monday issued directions to political parties on responsible and ethical use of social media in the campaign. The poll body asked them to remove fake content within three hours of it coming to their notice.

In an advisory to parties, the EC warned against misuse of AI-based tools to create deepfakes that distort information or propagate misinformation, emphasising the need to uphold the integrity of the electoral process.

In the doctored video, Mr. Shah is heard saying the BJP government would scrap quotas for Dalits, tribals and OBCs.

In a statement here, the EC said it has brought to the notice of political parties, the existing legal provisions that govern the regulatory framework against the use of misinformation and impersonation using deepfakes. This includes the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the Indian Penal Code, and framework of the twin acts namely the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951, and the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

In view of these existing legal provisions, among other directions, the parties have been specifically directed to refrain from publishing and circulating deepfake audios or videos; disseminating any misinformation or information which is patently false, untrue or misleading in nature; posting derogatory content towards women; using children in campaigns; and depicting violence or harm to animals.

The parties have been directed to promptly remove any such content within three hours of bringing it to their notice, warn the person responsible in their party, report unlawful information and fake user accounts to respective platforms, and escalate persistent issues to the Grievance Appellate Committee under Rule 3A of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

NewsClick case: HC orders release of approver

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday ordered the release of NewsClick Human Resources head Amit Chakraborty, who had turned approver in a case lodged against the news portal over allegations that it received funds to spread pro-China propaganda.

In January, a trial court here had allowed Mr. Chakraborty, to turn an approver, and also granted pardon to him in the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) case against him.

The High Court noted that his medical condition warranted special consideration.

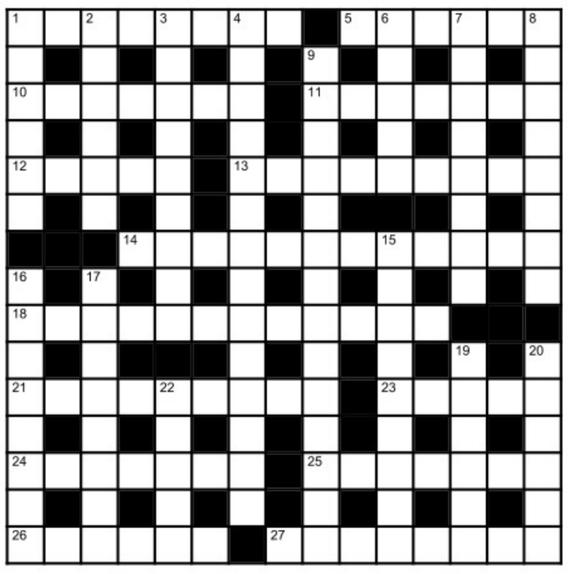
"Given the extent of his disability and dependence on a wheelchair, it is evident that the petitioner faces significant obstacles in carrying out even basic activities of daily living," the court said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14168

(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Foreign post - vacancies are temporary arrangements (8)
5 Roman banker invested money in deal, perhaps (6)
10 Personal security officer gets gun cover, relatively speaking (7)
11 Settles for flat drink (5,2)
12 Mean to train not even the indigenous people (5)
13 Restore control over pen (9)
14 Between man and manor oddly their meeting place (12)
18 America's tidy - may be on the eleventh day of the eleventh month (9,3)
21 Dialect in China, borders not seen at random (9)
23 Filthy place connected with the French fashion (5)
24 Turns away from other contributors, it's automatic (7)
25 Transfer both sides long before air passage (7)
26 Jolt from the centre, more or less (6)
27 Song able to make you squirm, as they say (8)

Down

1 Plant variety - same in outer space (6)
2 Go on working, about to get into a state (6)
3 Manipulates psychologically - bit in air, perhaps (9)
4 Extremely quiet, principles done away (7,7)
6 Inside a single thought or thoughts (5)
7 Make a strenuous effort, "but houses only for men" you said (4,1,3)
8 Drove back as heartbeat was in danger zone (8)
9 Old age complaint in detail - men see it differently (6,8)
15 Tops with something sweet, it's an advantage initially (4,5)
16 Brexit, both sides accept capital involving America, it's a gamble (8)
17 Accommodating everyone now - all leaders walk around (8)
19 "Arden's impenetrable", they say - it's all fictitious (6)
20 Danger of one supporting the army (6)
22 Open-air party is better (5)

SUDOKU

	8				4	6	9	
9							2	
1	6							7
			1		9	3		2
7	2						4	1
4		1	8		2			
5							6	9
	9							5
	1	7	9				3	

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

C	O	M	P	L	A	I	N	I	N	G		D	U	D
E		E		E		N		N		L		O		U
N	Y	A	L	A		R	I	G	M	A	R	O	L	E
O		C		S		O		R		D		B		N
T	O	U	C	H	B	A	S	E		S	I	R	E	N
A		L				D		S		T		Y		A
P	A	P	U	A	N	S		S	L	O	E			
H		A		V						N		E		R
			H	A	R	P		B	R	E	A	T	H	E
A		A		L		R		A				H		H
V	I	S	T	A		O	E	N	O	P	H	I	L	E
E		H		N		V		D		E		O		A
S	P	R	O	C	K	E	T	S		T	A	P	E	R
T		A		H		R		A		E		I		S
A	I	M		E	L	B	O	W	G	R	E	A	S	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	9	7	2	4	3	6	8	1
1	8	4	6	7	5	2	9	3
6	2	3	1	8	9	5	7	4
3	1	8	5	2	4	9	6	7
9	5	6	7	3	8	4	1	2
7	4	2	9	1	6	8	3	5
4	6	5	3	9	7	1	2	8
2	3	9	8	5	1	7	4	6
8	7	1	4	6	2	3	5	9

FAITH

Ambal resides in pure heart

In the Lalita Sahasranamam, Ambal is described as one who resides in the heart of a bhakta like a swan. Similar to how the waters of the Mansarovar lake is crystal clear, enabling one to see right to the bottom of the bed, so too should one strive to keep one's heart and mind pure since Ambal desires to reside there, said Dr. Sudha Seshayyan in a discourse.

The human mind is the most complex and one cannot fathom the depths of one's own. Often, when we ruminate we realise that we had certain thoughts.

The strength of a mind lies in its thoughts, and it has to be strong enough, in a dharmic way, for Ambal to reside in and foster a person, much like a mother raising her child with utmost care.

How does Ambal raise her bhaktas? She does so with discrimination. This is not the way that humans act, wherein they discriminate between two individuals. Rather the goddess imbues in her believers the sense to discern between right and wrong, between dharma and adharma, a faculty that no other sentient being is blessed with. It is human nature to be in a constant state of dilemma; even the selection of a seat in a restaurant leads us to doubt ourselves. When one masters temptations galore, one is ready to be blessed by Ambal.

INBRIEF

Indian Bank Q4 standalone net rises 55% to ₹2,247 cr.

Indian Bank's standalone net profit for the quarter ended March rose 55% YoY to ₹2,247 crore due to increase in interest income, reduction in provisions, and improvement in asset quality. Net interest income increased 9% to ₹6,015 crore, while net interest margin contracted to 3.44% from 3.56%, the public sector lender said in a statement. Gross non-performing assets decreased by 200 bps to 3.95% and net NPA shrank by 47 bps to 0.43%.

Sanjaya Kumar Mishra sworn in as GST Tribunal President

Paving the way for operationalising the GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) to resolve disputes, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday administered the oath of integrity and sincerity to the tribunal's first President, Justice (Retd.) Sanjaya Kumar Mishra. A former Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court, the GSTAT's first president has been selected by a Search-cum-Selection Committee headed by the Chief Justice of India.

CG Power Q4 standalone net rises marginally to ₹241 cr.

CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd.'s standalone net profit for the quarter ended March rose marginally to ₹240.59 crore. Revenue from operations increased 17% to ₹2,084 crore, of which Power Systems contributed ₹821 crore and Industrial Systems ₹1,263 crore. Margins in Power Systems were higher due to higher realisations and cost efficiencies, while it was lower in Industrial Systems on account of pricing pressure in low tension motors, CG Power said.

'GST's pro-poor tack has aided people'

Finance Minister Sitharaman asserts that taxes on many essential items including soaps are lower than in pre-GST era; attributes the recent landmark gross GST collections of more than ₹2 lakh crore to 'heightened economic activity'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime has benefitted people through a pro-poor approach, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asserted on Monday, adding the recent landmark gross GST revenue of more than ₹2 lakh crore was due to 'heightened economic activity'.

"Reflecting a pro-poor approach, the effective weighted average GST rate has consistently fallen since 2017," she said on X, adding that "GST lowered taxes on many essential items compared to pre-GST rates". "Common items like hair oil and soaps saw tax cut from 28% to 18%. Electrical appliances taxed at 12% v/s 31.5% before. Movie tickets were taxed lower, too," she contended, without detailing how the pre-GST rates were computed.

Reduced the burden: The earlier tax regime was complicated leading to an increased burden on common people, says FM. ANI

"Further... rationalisation has been done since 2017. National Anti-profiteering Authority ensured that companies passed the benefits to the consumers. GST has exempted many essential items and services, such as unbranded food items, certain life-saving drugs, healthcare, education, public transport, sanitary napkins, hearing aid parts, agricultural services, etc.," she observed.

Noting that the idea of GST was first mooted under the Atal Behari Vajpayee-led NDA government, Ms. Sitharaman said that the UPA government was unable to achieve political consensus on its implementation, while the necessary compact was "carefully built" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

"Before GST, India's indirect tax system was fragmented and complicated, and every State was practically a distinct market in itself with different rules and tax rates. Inputs for central excise duty, etc., could not be availed, leading to an increased tax burden for the common people," Ms. Sitharaman said.

April services PMI hints at a slowing in pace of expansion

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Services sector activity eased in April, as per the HSBC India Services Business Activity Index, which slid to 60.8 from March's 61.2, even as firms surveyed reported strong new order inflows, including the second-highest surge in export deals in a decade.

New business orders and output growth remained robust and among the fastest in 14 years.

Services firms surveyed by S&P Global attributed April's upturn in output to favourable economic conditions, demand strength, and rising intakes of new work. Confidence levels about the year-ahead outlook improved to a three-month high.

Despite the growth in new orders, only a few firms indicated readiness to add new hires, with several firms reporting adequate manpower for current requirements. So new jobs were created at a marginal pace that was lower than that seen in March.

Finance and insurance services reported steep growth, while the consumer services segment witnessed the sharpest increase in input costs. Higher costs were reported for fruits, vegetables, and labour, triggering a continuing uptick in operating expenses through April.

"Input costs continued to rise sharply, albeit slower than in March, but resulted in squeezed margins... as only part of the price rise was passed on to clients," observed Pranjul Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC.

'Permanently deleting logs can help make e-rupee anonymous'

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said permanent deletion of transactions can help make the e-rupee or central bank digital currency (CBDC) anonymous and place it on a par with paper currency.

Speaking at the BIS Innovation Summit, Mr. Das said India was also working on making the CBDC transferable in the offline mode along with introducing a programmability feature to help its financial inclusion goals. Since the introduction of the CBDC in late 2022, there have been concerns about the privacy aspect, with some saying the electronic nature will leave a trail of where all the currency has been used, unlike cash which offers anonymity.

"Anonymity can be addressed through legislation and/or through technology. For example, through permanent deletion of transactions," Mr. Das said.

"The basic principle is that CBDC can have the same degree of anonymity as cash, no more and no less," he added.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	73,896	0.02
US Dollar	83.52	-0.08
Gold	72,250	0.06
Brent oil	83.74	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2874.65	-118.60
Adani Ports	1289.95	-30.35
Apollo Hosp	6056.70	47.10
Asian Paints	2932.15	2.40
Axis Bank	1143.65	2.15
Bajaj Auto	9052.55	-53.05
Bajaj Finserv	1611.35	-15.95
Bajaj Finance	6859.85	-71.65
Bharti Airtel	1283.40	6.00
BPCL	610.25	-19.60
Britannia Ind	5061.60	317.00
Cipla	1423.40	-1.35
Coal India	460.60	-14.00
Divis Lab	3963.00	12.05
Dr Reddys Lab	6293.45	-56.10
Eicher Motors	4599.00	-0.25
Grasim Ind	2453.30	-28.05
HCL Tech	1358.80	10.75
HDFC Bank	1522.65	3.05
HDFC Life	555.05	-10.85
Hero MotoCorp	4509.75	-43.00
Hindalco	638.80	-8.30
Hind Unilever	2256.20	39.15
ICICI Bank	1146.30	4.25
IndusInd Bank	1497.50	13.80
Infosys	1425.90	9.60
ITC	434.75	-1.70
JSW Steel	880.65	6.45
Kotak Bank	1624.30	77.60
L&T	3463.30	-36.50
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4703.95	52.00
M&M	2224.95	31.95
Maruti Suzuki	12439.30	-52.85
NestleIndia	2457.40	1.30
NTPC	356.80	-8.15
ONGC	282.15	-3.95
PowerGrid Corp	306.85	-4.00
Reliance Ind	2839.05	-28.95
SBI Life	1440.60	-2.65
State Bank	807.80	-23.65
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2547.55	-41.00
Sun Pharma	1529.15	18.00
TataConsumerProduct	1098.15	3.85
Tata Motors	1016.20	2.80
Tata Steel	167.60	1.10
TCS	3921.05	77.65
Tech Mahindra	1262.25	11.80
Titan	3280.15	-253.75
UltraTech Cement	9776.90	-39.40
Wipro	458.65	1.30

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 06

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.29	83.61
Euro	89.73	90.08
British Pound	104.76	105.17
Japanese Yen (100)	54.16	54.37
Chinese Yuan	11.56	11.60
Swiss Franc	91.99	92.36
Singapore Dollar	61.68	61.93
Canadian Dollar	60.92	61.16
Malaysian Ringitt	17.57	17.65
Australian Dollar	55.22	55.44

Source:Indian Bank

Coromandel International raises stake in Ecozen

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Agriculture solutions provider Coromandel International has raised its stake in climate-smart deep-tech company Ecozen with a ₹24 crore investment by subsidiary and corporate venture capital arm Dare Ventures.

"Dare Ventures is acquiring 3.13% equity stake... with this our company will hold 5.54% stake in Ecozen," Coromandel said in a filing.

The Murugappa group firm said with sustainable solutions like solar-powered irrigation, Ecozen has bettered more than 1.8 lakh Indian farmers' lives.

IOB to sell 92 NPAs in two lots via e-auction

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) said it had initiated "multi-pronged steps" to sell 92 non-performing assets in two lots through e-auction under the open auction method to recover ₹13,472 crore.

The lender said it had published a sale notification to recover the maximum amount from the NPA accounts. The earlier measures taken by the bank had resulted in reduction of GNPAs from 11.69% as of March 2021 to 3.9% in December 2023.

The first portfolio encompasses 46 accounts financed under consortium arrangements, 3 accounts under multiple banking arrangements, and the remaining two sole banking ventures.

Further, 38 accounts within the portfolio are formally admitted under the purview of NCLT. The second portfolio consists of 41 sole banking accounts.

IOB has asked interested asset reconstruction companies and other eligible transferees to submit Expressions of Interest by May 13 to participate in the e-auction on May 28.

India Ratings raises FY25 GDP growth view to 7.1%

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India Ratings and Research on Monday raised its GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 7.1% from 6.5% earlier, citing strong support to the growth momentum from sustained government capex and deleveraged corporate and bank balance sheets, even as consumption demand and exports pose constraints.

Private consumption spends are expected to rise at a three-year high pace of 7% this year, from just 3% last year, thanks to the above normal monsoon forecast, which bodes well for weak rural consumption trends, the firm said.

'LuLu targets bigger fashion retail share'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

LuLu India is in the process of sharpening its focus on fashion apparel, accessories and lifestyle markets in the country.

The UAE-based LuLu Group, a retail conglomerate that sells more than 100 fashion lifestyle and apparel brands through its malls and outlets across India, on Monday said it was in the process of solidifying its position to grow its share in the Indian fashion retail market.

'Large marketplace'

"India is a large marketplace where many large retail fashion players coexist," said Shareef K.K., Regional Director, LuLu Group. "We are constantly expanding in the country. We are offering the lifestyle people want, through various retail formats, including LuLu Malls and LuLu Hypermarkets."

As a precursor to this exercise, LuLu India is bringing together diverse brands like Pepe Jeans, Peter Englad, Amukthi, Crpydon UK, SIN, Louis Philippe, Venfield, Damoza, Levis, Identiti, Jockey,Lavie, V-star, Blossom, Caprese, VIP, American Tourister and many others to LuLu Mall in Bengaluru.

"We have planned a fashion show to emphasise fashion is for all," Jamal K.P., Regional Manager, LuLu Group, Karnataka, said.

VST Tillers, HTC ally to add power tractor

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

VST Tillers Tractors, a compact tractors and power tillers maker, on Monday announced a joint venture with the Czech Republic's HTC Investments, the maker of 'Zetor' brand tractors. The JV will be known as VST Zetor.

Antony Cherukara, MD, VST Zetor, said VST, which commands 70% share in India's compact tractor market, had now entered into a new segment of tractors (41-50 HP range) that currently accounts for 59% of the total 8.75 lakh units of tractors sold in India.

"We have so far been focusing on smaller tractors to help farmers with small land holdings. But India's farm sector is likely to see a consolidation," observed Mr. Cherukara, explaining the rationale for the JV.

Antony Cherukara, Filip Soka

"Our collaboration also promises to raise agricultural standards in India," said Filip Soka, vice chairman of VST Zetor, who added that the firm was returning to India after several years.

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE LXVI ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-67)
O.S. No. 5078/2023
Hg. 20/06/2024

Between :
M/s. ICICI Bank Limited having its registered office at Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390 007, having its head office at and Zonal office at 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru-560 068 and also having branch at M.G. Road, Bengaluru, through its Authorised representative Mr. Harish E. ...Plaintiff
And :
Mr. Sukumar N. ...Defendant

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC

Defendant :
Mr. Sukumar N.
S/o. Kondaiah Nagaraja
Aged about 35 years
771, 2nd Floor, Sudha Illam, 6th Main, 5th Cross, Doddabanaswadi, Kalyannagar, Bangalore-560 043.
And also
R/at No. 33, Seethamma Road, MSR Nagar Post, RS Palya, Kullappa Circle, Bangalore- 560 033.

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 5,74,030.46/-** along with interest at the rate of **24% P.A.** against you, and you are summoned to appear before the LXVI Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H.-67), in person or by a pleader, on the day of 20/06/2024 at 11:00 A.M. to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the **24th** day of **April, 2024** at Bangalore

By order of the Court
Assistant Registrar
Hon'ble City Civil Court
Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhii Partners,
Advocates
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A', 3, Queen's Road, Bengaluru-01

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, CHANDRASEKARAN, R/at No.50, 2nd Cross, Sector B, Ramaiah Reddy Colony, Basavanagar, Bangalore-560037, have changed my name from Chandrasekaran to Chandrasekaran Venkatesan vide affidavit dated 06/05/2024 before Notary Harisha.G, Bangalore.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE LV ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-56)
O.S. No. 2585/2023
Hg. 19/06/2024

Between :
M/s. ICICI Bank Limited Having its registered office at Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390 007. Having its head office at and Zonal office at 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru- 560 068 and also having branch at M.G. Road, Bengaluru, through its Authorized representative Mr. Rohith Ali M. ...Plaintiff
And :
Ms. B. Lakshmi ...Defendant

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT NO 1 & 2 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC

Defendant :
Ms. B. Lakshmi,
D/o. Bhandugi Bhanudas, Aged About 32 Years, R/at No. 201, Ashwathappa Building, Near Anjaneya Swamy Temple, BTM 2nd Stage, Near Anjaneya Swamy Temple, Bangalore- 560 076.

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 5,19,716.03/-** along with interest at the rate of **24% P.A.** against you, and you are summoned to appear before the LV Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H.-56), in person or by a pleader, on the day of **19/06/2024** at **11:00 AM** to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the **22nd** day of **April, 2024** at Bangalore.

By order of the Court
Assistant Registrar
Hon'ble City Civil Court
Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhii Partners,
Advocates
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A', 3, Queen's Road, Bengaluru-01

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2G

Corrigendum-4 to Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/58/2023 Dated : 09-08-2023

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Construction of New Broad Gauge Line Track Between Hirekotangal (Excl.115500) and Mamdapur (Excl.155000) (39.5 km) under Ginigera - Raichur New Line Project (165.57 km) including Signalling, Telecommunication & Electrical Works. **(Tender Ref. No. HIREKOTANGAL-MAMDAPUR-EPC)**	Rs. 752,19,45,242/-

Bid Due Date	
Existing	Revised
31-05-2024 (11:00 Hrs)	CANCELLED

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction / Works
Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/46/AAS/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway - SWR · SWRRLY · SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of the general public that my client **Mrs. Kauser Fathima** W/o. Mr. Mohammed Thakal Residing at No. 303/2, Dorobseth Road, Corporation Quarters Austin Town, Bangalore 560 047. has negotiated to purchase the schedule mentioned property from the owner Mrs. Joyce Devaputhri W/o. Late. Srinivasan and daughter in law of Late Jaganathan, Residing at No. 315, Austin Town, Corporation Quarters, Bangalore 560 047, any person having objection in the said sale transaction may file their objection before the undersigned advocate within seven days from the date of this notice failing which the transaction shall be completed.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property consisting of land and residence Corporation Quarters bearing No.315, Austin Town, Ward No.71 Bangalore-560 047. **BBMP.PID.NO.71-54-315.**
Old house at ground floor 442.96 Sq feet built with cement, cement flooring, tiled roof.

Measuring
East to West 23-00'' feet
North to South 23-00'' feet
Land totally measuring 529 Sq. feet.

Bounded on:
East by: Road,
West by: BCC Qtrs No.282.
North by: BCC Qtrs No.314.
South by: BCC Qtrs No.316.

J. RAVINDRAN Advocate
No.310, 4th Cross, 6th Main, Viveknagar, Bangalore-569947. Mobile: 9900609429

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have agreed to purchase **50% undivided share of interest in the Schedule property** from its owners: **(1)Sri.PRASHANTH.N** & **(2)Sri.PRADEEP NARASIMHA** both sons of late G.Narasimha Murthy, **(3)Sri.H.G.SRIKANTH** & **(4)Sri.H.G.RANGANATH** both sons of late H.S.Gundanna, residing at: No.8, Kanakapura Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004.

Apart from the said Owners, if any other person/s have any manner of right, title and or interest or claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for sale of the Schedule Property by the aforesaid Owners, they are hereby called upon to file their objection/s in writing, along with the photocopies of documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Municipal No.53 (Old No.16 then 18), having PID No.49-56-53, measuring East to West 35 ft and North to South 120 ft, in all measuring 4200 Sq.ft., with a building thereon, situated at Vanivilas Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004 and bounded on:

East by : Conservancy
West by : Property No.15
North by: Vani Vilas Road
South by: Conservancy

Sd/- **S.F. GOUTAM CHAND**
Advocate
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004.

ISTANBUL

Erdogan opens former church to Muslim worshippers in Turkiye

AFP

Turkiye on Monday reopened a mosque converted from an ancient Orthodox church in Istanbul for Muslim worship. The Kariye Mosque was formerly a Byzantine church, then a mosque and then a museum. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordered the building to be reconverted into a Muslim place of worship in 2020. AFP

NEW YORK

Columbia axes graduation event as U.S. colleges counter Gaza protests

AFP

Columbia University, the epicentre of U.S. student protests against the war in Gaza, on Monday cancelled its main graduation ceremony, as colleges seek to contain the demonstrations. The college in New York cited security concerns as it cancelled the event scheduled for May 15, with smaller events planned instead. AFP

BANGKOK

Myanmar ethnic armed group captures hundreds of junta troops

REUTERS

A Myanmar ethnic armed group said on Monday it had captured a military command and taken hundreds of junta personnel prisoner in western Rakhine State. Clashes have rocked Rakhine since the Arakan Army (AA) attacked security forces in November, ending a ceasefire that had largely held since the junta's 2021 coup. AFP

MANILA

Philippines will not use water cannon on Chinese ships: Marcos

REUTERS

President Ferdinand Marcos said on Monday the Philippines would not respond in kind to China's deployment of water cannon against its vessels, ruling out the use of "offensive" equipment as Manila asserts its sovereignty in the disputed South China Sea. On April 30, Manila said the China Coast Guard had damaged its vessels. AFP

Hezbollah strikes Israel after attack on east Lebanon

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Lebanese official media said an Israeli strike on Monday wounded three persons in the country's east, with Hezbollah saying it launched "dozens of Katyusha rockets" at an Israeli base in retaliation.

Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah have exchanged regular cross-border fire since Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on southern Israel sparked war in the Gaza Strip.

"Enemy warplanes launched a strike at around 1:30 a.m. this morning on a factory in Sifri, wounding three civilians and destroying the building," a media report said.

Sifri is in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley, a Hezbollah stronghold that Israel has repeatedly struck in recent weeks, located around 80 km from the Israel-Lebanon frontier.

Biden speaks with Netanyahu, urges him not to launch offensive in Rafah

News of Hamas's nod for truce comes hours after Tel Aviv ordered 1,00,000 Palestinians to begin evacuating Rafah; White House waiting to learn more about the Hamas position on whether it agreed to existing terms or something else

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden again urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against launching an offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah as Israel on Monday appeared to be moving closer to an offensive to root out Hamas militants.

But soon after Israel announced that it was ordering about 1,00,000 Palestinians to begin evacuating from Rafah, Hamas said in a statement it has accepted an Egyptian-Qatari proposal for a ceasefire to halt the seven-month-long war with Israel in Gaza.

A U.S. official, who was not authorised to comment publicly and insisted on anonymity, cautioned that the White House was still waiting to learn more about the Hamas position and whether it reflected an agreement to what had already been signed off on by Israel and international negotiators or to something else.

No let-up: Smoke billows after Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Monday. AFP

In recent days, Egyptian and Hamas officials have said the ceasefire would take place in a series of stages during which Hamas would release hostages it is holding in exchange for Israeli troop pullbacks from Gaza.

Top Biden administration officials have been publicly pressing Hamas to accept what they have described as a generous offer by the Israelis that would also lead to an extended truce and the release of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli prisons and perhaps lay the groundwork for a permanent end to the current conflict.

The White House said Mr. Biden in a Monday morning phone call with Mr. Netanyahu underscored U.S. concerns about an invasion of Rafah, where more than 1 million civilians from other parts of Gaza are sheltering as the war sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel has led to the deaths of more than 34,000 Palestinians and deprivation in the territory.

Mr. Biden told Mr. Netanyahu that he still believes reaching a ceasefire with Hamas is the best way to protect the lives of Israeli hostages held in Gaza, officials said.

"The President reiterated his clear position on Rafah," according to a White House summary of the call.

The latest developments come as Mr. Biden was hosting King Abdullah II of Jordan for a private lunch at the White House on Monday to discuss the war and hostage talks.

On Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu rejected international pressure to halt the war in Gaza in a fiery speech marking the country's annual Holocaust memorial day, declaring: "If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone."

"I say to the leaders of the world: No amount of pressure will stop Israel from defending itself," he said, speaking in English.

Putin orders nuclear drills as NATO mulls troop deployment

Tit for tat: Russia said the drill would involve the air force, navy and troops stationed near Ukraine. AFP

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered nuclear weapons drills near Ukraine, Moscow said on Monday, in response to "threats" from Western officials to deploy NATO troops to Ukraine.

The announcement came as Russian forces said they captured two villages in the war-battered regions of Donetsk and Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, where outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian troops have struggled to hold the line.

Russian officials in the border region of Belgorod meanwhile announced that Ukrainian attack drones had killed six persons and wounded over 30, including several children.

Mr. Putin has upped his nuclear rhetoric since ordering his Army into Ukraine in 2022 for a 'special military operation', warning in February there was a "real" risk of nuclear war.

The Defence Ministry gave no date for the drills, but said they would involve the air force, navy and troops stationed near Ukraine.

The Kremlin specified that the exercises were a response to statements by French President Emmanuel Macron and British officials.

Russia has in recent days hit out at Mr. Macron for telling *The Economist* magazine he was "not ruling anything out" in the West's response to the conflict in Ukraine, including sending troops to the country.

It has also blasted U.K. Foreign Secretary David Cameron for saying Kyiv has the right to strike targets inside Russia.

'Dangerous rhetoric'

"They are talking about the readiness and even the intention of sending armed contingents to Ukraine – that is, in fact, to put NATO soldiers in front of the Russian military," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"This is a completely new round of escalating tensions. It is unprecedented and requires special measures," he added.

Macron urges Xi to use clout, halt Russia's Ukraine war

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen pressed Xi Jinping at a summit in Paris on Monday to use Beijing's influence to halt the Russian war against Ukraine, also telling the Chinese leader to accept fair global trade rules.

Opening an initial trilateral meeting attended by Ms. von der Leyen, Mr. Macron said coordination with Beijing on "major crises" including the Ukraine-war was "absolutely decisive" and urged "fair rules for all" in Europe-China trade.

"The future of our continent will very clearly depend on our ability to continue to develop relations with China in a balanced manner," Mr. Macron said.

Mr. Xi said China and the EU should "remain partners" and "carry out strategic coordination" and thus "make new contributions to world peace and development".

Europe is concerned that while officially neutral in the Ukraine conflict, China is essentially backing Russia which is already using Chinese machine tools in arms production.

Ms. von der Leyen said that France and the EU also "count on China to use all its influence on Russia to end Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine". She added that both Europe and China "have a shared in interest in peace and security".

New visa system faces backlash in Sri Lanka over fee hike, 'Indian role'

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

A fortnight after Sri Lanka switched to a new visa issuing system, authorities are facing a backlash over higher visa costs that could deter tourists, "Indian involvement", and "corruption" in the subject Minister's push to outsource visa processing.

Beginning April 17, Sri Lanka's Department of Immigration and Emigration directed travellers to a new visa portal, run by VFS Global, for online visa application under various categories. The formerly used Electronic Travel Authorisation system, known for its speed and accessibility, was scrapped.

The move followed a Cabinet decision last year, based on a proposal from Public Security Minister Tiran Alles, to appoint GBS Technology Services & IVS Global-FZCO and VFS Global as authorised agents for the online submission of visa applications for foreigners visiting Sri Lanka. Subsequently, the three companies formed a consortium and signed an agreement with Sri Lankan authorities, according to officials.

With the introduction of the new system, Sri Lanka's visa fee nearly doubled, along with the introduction of a $18.5 service fee and $5 convenience fee charged by VFS Global. Even as users pointed to the absence of a single-entry, 30-day tourist visa option, a recent video recording of a visiting Sri Lankan complaining that "Indians" were handling visa issuance at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo sparked a fresh controversy. The video clip of the angry man went viral, prompting the Indian High Commission in Colombo to clarify that the companies involved are "not India-based or Indian and are headquartered elsewhere". "Any reference to India in this context is unwarranted," a statement issued on May 2 said.

Tall costs: Sri Lanka's visa fee nearly doubled following the introduction of the new system. REUTERS

Steep hike

GBS Technology Services is Singapore-based, and partners with IVS Global Services, a company incorporated in Maharashtra in 2010. Now a global outsourcing and technology services provider, IVS also processes Indian visa applications of Sri Lankans. VFS Global, founded in India in 2001, is currently headquartered in Zurich and Dubai, and was acquired by the American private equity firm Blackstone in 2021.

Those operating in Sri Lanka's crucial tourism industry see the steep hike in visa fees in conflict with the government's stated aim of boosting tourist arrivals. "From an industry point of view, we have no problem with opting for a technologically advanced system. But we don't understand why the old system, which was simple and effective, is being replaced with much higher costs to visitors," said Nishad Wijetunga, president of the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators.

Along with other industry representatives, he wrote to President Ranil Wickremesinghe recently, urging him to intervene and restore "a competitive, user-friendly visa process through a government-operated website", to sustain the "positive momentum" seen in the country's tourism sector.

While Sri Lankan media went to town with the "visa fiasco" over the weekend, Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa took to social media platform 'X' on Monday to challenge the government's decision. "When Cabinet papers were submitted for VFS selection, what were the factors that led to choosing VFS at $25.77 over $1 per arrival that [state-owned telecom's] SLT Mobitel offered?" he asked.

Addressing a media conference on Monday, Public Security Minister Tiran Alles defended the move, saying the new visa costs were still lower than what some other countries charged. "VFS cannot issue or reject visas. They can only check the documentation," he said, adding that the company was "not Indian".

Indian tourists

Meanwhile, Indian tourists, who have consistently topped Sri Lanka's arrival charts – 3,02,844 or 20% of total arrivals in 2023 – have encountered a peculiar problem navigating the new system. In a bid to encourage tourism and revive the island's crisis-hit economy, Sri Lanka in October 2023 waived visa fees for tourists from India and six other countries – China, Russia, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. The arrangement has since been extended.

However, despite qualifying for a "free visa", Indians are having to pay close to $23, towards service and convenience fee. "If they tell us this is the visa fee, that is one thing. But when you are told the visa is free, and then charged for it, it puts you off," said Nadeem Sheikh, owner of a travel company in New Delhi, who recently applied for a Sri Lankan visa online.

Germany recalls Russia envoy over cyberattack

Agence France-Presse
BERLIN

Germany has temporarily recalled its Russian Ambassador after members of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party were targeted in what Berlin said was a state-sponsored Russian cyberattack, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

A government investigation found the cyberattack targeting members of Mr. Scholz's Social Democratic Party had been carried out by a group known as APT28, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said last week.

The group was controlled by Russia's military intelligence, meaning it was "a state-sponsored Russian cyberattack on Germany," Mr. Baerbock added. Russia rejected the allegations as "unsubstantiated and groundless".

APT28, also known as Fancy Bear, has been accused of dozens of cyberattacks in countries around the world.

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer (Project) PHED Bharatpur
E-mail :- acepbpr@gmail.com, aceproj.bha.phed@rajasthan.gov.in
Notice Inviting Bid No.13/2023-24 Corrigendum No.04
Due to unavoidable circumstances bid submission date of this office NIT No. 13/2023-24 has been extended and last date of submission has been made as 15.05.2024.
Other terms and conditions will remain same as per original NIT.
UBN No: - PHE2324WLOB15169
(Mahesh Jangir)
Additional Chief Engineer (Project)
PHED Bharatpur
DIPR/C/3459/2024

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer (Project) PHED Bharatpur
E-mail :- acepbpr@gmail.com, aceproj.bha.phed@rajasthan.gov.in
Notice Inviting Bid No.14/2023-24 Corrigendum No.04
Due to unavoidable circumstances bid submission date of this office NIT No. 14/2023-24 has been extended and last date of submission has been made as 15.05.2024.
Other terms and conditions will remain same as per original NIT.
UBN No: - PHE2324WLOB15202
(Mahesh Jangir)
Additional Chief Engineer (Project)
PHED Bharatpur
DIPR/C/3460/2024

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निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण ग्रुप / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP
तिरुवनंतपुरम / THIRUVANANTHAPURAM – 22 / (फोन नं. / Ph. No. 0471 - 2564568 / 5669 / 4537)
ई-निविदा की अवधि बढ़ाना / EXTENSION OF E-TENDER
1. आरपीपी, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में आबद्ध भंडार के लिए नोदक कच्ची सामग्रीओं के संचयन हेतु भवन का निर्माण (सिविल कार्य) / Construction of building for Bonded Store for storage of propellant raw materials at RPP, VSSC, Thumba (Civil works) / **NIT No. VSSC/CMG/C01/25/2023-24 Dt. 25.03.2024**
2. आरपीपी, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में 6 एमइवी लिनैक तथा 450 केवी रेडियोग्राफी सुविधा रखने के लिए आर–43 भवन का संवर्धन (सिविल तथा पीएच कार्य) / Augmentation of R-43 building for housing 6 MeV LINAC and 450 kV Radiography facility at RPP, VSSC, Thumba (Civil & PH works) / **NIT No. VSSC/CMG/C01/26/2023-24 Dt. 25.03.2024**
3. एपीईपी, आलुवा में अमोनियम क्लोरैड शेड के लिए भवन का निर्माण (सिविल कार्य) / Construction of building for Ammonium Chloride shed at APEP, Aluva (Civil works) / **NIT No. VSSC/CMG/C01/28/2023-24 Dt. 25.03.2024**

डाउनलोड करने की अवधि/Period for downloading	दिनांक 15.05.2024 को 23:00 बजे तक बढ़ाए गए/Extended upto 23:00 hrs. on 15.05.2024
निविदाओं की प्राप्ति / Receipt of tenders	दिनांक 20.05.2024 को 23:00 बजे तक बढ़ाए गए/Extended upto 23:00 hrs. on 20.05.2024

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ASSESSMENT

We read the pitch very well, says Knight Riders pacer Rana

SANDEEP SAXENA

KKR seamer Harshit Rana spoke about the side reading the Ekana Stadium pitch to perfection. "KKR read the wicket very well. The areas we had to bowl, we targeted the right places. We focus a lot on the style of cricket that Gautam Gambhir wants us to play. He has a lot of knowledge on how to turn games in our favour," Rana said.

MATCH-WINNER

Narine equals Russell's record of most PoM awards for KKR in IPL

SANDEEP SAXENA

Sunil Narine equalled Andre Russell's record of claiming the most Player-of-the-Match awards for Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL. Narine and Russell have 15 PoM awards for the Kolkata-based franchise while former skipper Gautam Gambhir holds the third place with 10 PoM awards.

CRITICISM

Lee slams Rahul for lack of intent during LSG-KKR clash

SANDEEP SAXENA

Brett Lee criticised LSG skipper K.L. Rahul for his poor strike rate during his side's loss to KKR. "KKR openers has got it right. They are out of the blocks quickly. And then you got Rahul on the other side, who is getting a run a ball and putting a lot of pressure on the back end," Lee told *JioCinema*.

PULLING IT BACK

We were 15-20 runs short but did not bowl any loose balls: Jadeja

R.V. MOORTHY

CSK all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja admitted that the side fell short by 15-20 runs but lauded its disciplined bowling show against PBKS. "We thought we were 15-20 runs short but we did not bowl loose balls. Tushar got two important wickets and then Mitch and I did the job in the middle overs," Jadeja said.

Suryakumar's scintillating, unbeaten ton drives Mumbai Indians' easy win

The flamboyant batter and Tilak Varma stitch together a 143-run partnership to trump Sunrisers Hyderabad with plenty to spare

IPL-17

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Captain Hardik Pandya's pace and veteran leg-spinner Piyush Chawla's craft put the brakes on Sunrisers Hyderabad's batting line-up before Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma's scintillating display with the willow gave Mumbai Indians a rare win this season.

Riding on Suryakumar's 51-ball unbeaten 102, studded with 12 fours and six sixes, and his unbroken third-wicket association of 143 off just 79 balls with Tilak (37 not out, 32b, 6x4), the host overhauled the target of 174 with 16 balls to spare.

When Tilak took guard in the fifth over, MI was in a spot of bother.

With the Sunrisers pace battery having reduced the home team to 31 for three, Mumbai Indians was in danger of letting its bowlers' good work come apart because of another poor show by the top-order.

Ishan Kishan, straightened up by Marco Jansen, was caught in slips, Rohit Sharma miscued a pull off Cummins, and Naman Dhir slashed Bhuvneshwar to point to make early exits.

But in the seventh over, Suryakumar changed the complexion by taking on Jansen. In what turned out to be a 22-run over, Suryakumar swung the left-arm pacer over the fine-leg fence twice with his trademark behind-the-wicket innovations.

Master at work: Suryakumar delighted the home crowd with his trademark innovative shots. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Then on, Tilak played a perfect second fiddle as his partner continued to torment the opposition attack.

The flamboyant batter settled a score with Cummins by essaying three consecutive pull shots in the 17th over that not only brought MI to the cusp of a win but also put him on the verge of a hundred. He achieved both the milestones in the next over by lofting S. Natarajan's first ball over long-off for a six.

Had it not been for Chawla and Hardik's partnership with the ball, MI would have been chasing a stiffer target.

The duo picked three crucial wickets – Travis Head, Nitish Kumar Reddy, and Heinrich Klaasen – for just six runs in 11 balls to derail Sunrisers from 90 for two to 96 for five.

The two shared another three scalps in the 16th and 17th overs to put MI on top before Cummins' cameo helped SRH cross the 170-run mark.

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Kolkata Knight Riders	11	8	3	16	1.453
Rajasthan Royals	10	8	2	16	0.622
Chennai Super Kings	11	6	5	12	0.700
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	6	5	12	-0.065
Lucknow Super Giants	11	6	5	12	-0.371
Delhi Capitals	11	5	6	10	-0.442
Royal Challengers	11	4	7	8	-0.049
Punjab Kings	11	4	7	8	-0.187
Mumbai Indians	12	4	8	8	-0.212
Gujarat Titans	11	4	7	8	-1.320

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Travis Head c Tilak b Chawla 48 (*30b, 7x4, 1x6*), Abhishek Sharma c Ishan b Bumrah 11 (*16b, 1x6*), Mayank Agarwal b Kamboj 5 (*6b, 1x4*), Nitish Kumar Reddy c Kamboj b Hardik 20 (*15b, 2x4*), Heinrich Klaasen b Chawla 2 (*4b*), Marco Jansen b Hardik 17 (*12b, 1x4, 1x6*), Shahbaz Ahmed c Suryakumar b Hardik 10 (*12b*), Abdul Samad lbw b Chawla 3 (*4b*), Pat Cummins (not out) 35 (*17b, 2x4, 2x6*), Sanvir Singh (**Impact Player in place of Abhishek**) (not out) 8 (*7b*); Extras (lb-2, nb-3, w-9): 14; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 173.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-56 (Abhishek, 5.5 overs), 2-68 (Mayank, 7.4), 3-90 (Head, 10.3), 4-92 (Nitish, 11.1), 5-96 (Klaasen, 12.1), 6-120 (Shahbaz, 15.1), 7-124 (Jansen, 15.5), 8-136 (Samad, 16.6).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Thushara 4-0-42-0, Kamboj 4-0-42-1, Bumrah 4-0-23-1, Hardik 4-0-31-3, Chawla 4-0-33-3.

MUMBAI INDIANS
Ishan Kishan c Mayank b Jansen 9 (*7b, 2x4*), Rohit Sharma c Klaasen b Cummins 4 (*5b, 1x4*), Naman Dhir c Jansen b Bhuvneshwar 0 (*9b*), Suryakumar Yadav (not out) 102 (*51b, 12x4, 6x6*), Tilak Varma (not out) 37 (*32b, 6x4*); Extras (b-4, lb-10, w-8): 22; Total (for three wkts. in 17.2 overs): 174.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-26 (Kishan, 1.4), 2-31 (Rohit, 3.2), 3-31 (Dhir, 4.1).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 4-1-22-1, Jansen 3-0-45-1, Cummins 4-1-35-1, Natarajan 3.2-0-31-0, Nitish 2-0-16-0, Shahbaz 1-0-11-0.

Toss: Mumbai Indians. **PoM:** Suryakumar
MI won by seven wickets with 16 balls to spare

Next assignment

SRH: May 8 vs **LSG**
Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

MI: May 11 vs **KKR**
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

Capitals host formidable Royals in a crucial encounter

Key player: It would stand Delhi Capitals in good stead if Warner can fire at the top. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Pranay Rajiv
NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals' (DC) stop-start IPL 2024 campaign enters its final lap as it takes on formidable Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Tuesday.

DC began the season on the wrong foot, losing four of its first five games. But the Rishabh Pant-led side soon clicked into gear, winning four of its next five matches to put itself in contention for a playoff spot.

But a heavy defeat against Kolkata Knights Riders in its last match means DC's top-four chances hinge on other results going its way.

For the Royals, the plot has been far more buoyant. Sanju Samson's men have been on a roll, winning eight of their 10 matches.

Batting fire-power

Royals' success this season has been built around their well-rounded batting unit. They currently boast four players – Riyan Parag, Samson, Yashavi Jaiswal and Jos Buttler – with a 300+ run tally, more than any other team this season.

Royals' batting brawn will fit well with the conditions here, which has seen runs flow faster than any other venue in this IPL (11.85 runs per over).

DC too has some firepower in its rank, with the prominent ammunition being its young Aussie opener Jake Fraser-McGurk, who has scored 259 runs at a scarcely believable strike-rate of 233.33 in his debut IPL season.

When these two sides met earlier in the season, in Jaipur, Rajasthan Royals squeezed out a 12-run win. A similar result on Tuesday could all but ring the death knell for DC's IPL campaign.

Today's match

DELHI CAPITALS vs. RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 28
DC 13 | RR 15

PREVIOUS MEETING
RR won by 12 runs, 2024

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

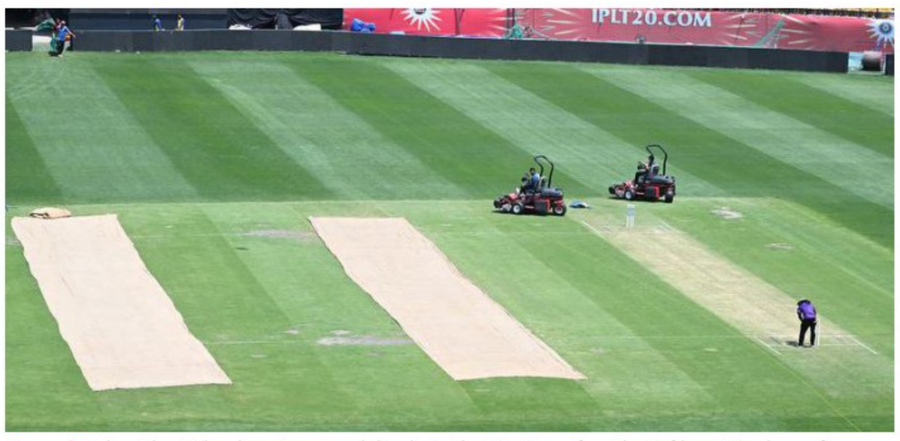
'Hybrid' pitches have helped improve the practice facilities at Dharamshala

Shayan Acharya
DHARAMSHALA

Soon after the ODI World Cup got over last year, the officials at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) had a discussion with the players on how to improve the practice facilities.

The players stated that with too much cricket happening throughout the year, there was quite a bit of wear and tear on the practice pitches, which needed urgent attention.

Led by Indian Premier League's Governing Council chairman Arun Dhumal, the HPCA decided to instal four hybrid pitches on the square of the scenic venue at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala, and *SIS-Grass*, a UK-based synthetic turf manufacturer, was tasked with the project.



Upgrade: The side pitches have improved thanks to the injection of synthetic fibres into the surface. R.V. MOORTHY

Under the guidance of former England international Paul Taylor, his team worked round the clock from the second week of March this year and injected five per cent synthetic fibres into the natural surface to ensure the pitches were stronger and ready before the Indian Premier League.

"During a game, your centre wicket is always protected, but the load is high on the side wickets that are used for practice sessions. So, our objective was to provide good practice wickets to the teams and that's why we decided to use this technology," Dhumal told *The Hindu* on Monday.

"The soil binding remains the same, the quality of the grass improves and the wickets are better. With this, we can take care of any wear and tear on the surface. For now, we have used this technology only for practice pitches and if and when the ICC gives approval for it to be used in international games, we will react accordingly," he said.

The players from Punjab Kings and Chennai Super Kings had long sessions over the last few days and according to Dhumal, the players were happy with the practice pitches and 'did not even realise that there is five per cent fibre injected into it'.

According to Taylor, "We use polyethylene monofilament fibre and the fundamental thing that is different about our pitch, is that it's still 95 percent a natural turf surface."

Have to look into areas we can work on, says Naveen

Pranay Rajiv
LUCKNOW

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) pacer Naveen-ul-Haq urged his team to brush past the resounding defeat it suffered against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the IPL here on Sunday.

"It happens. Every team gets a bad day. All we can do is focus on the next game as this one is in the past. We can't reverse it however much we think about it. We have to look into the areas we can work on and prepare for the next game," said Naveen at the post-match press conference.

LSG bowlers had a day to forget as KKR became the first team to register a 200+ score in an IPL game at the Ekana Stadium.

Naveen, who was LSG's best bowler with figures of three for 49 in four overs, admitted that Sunday's surface favoured the batters, while also conceding that his team's batting performance left a lot to desire.

Just a stumble: Naveen, right, said every team is allowed to have one bad day. SANDEEP SAXENA

"In the games we have played here, I think this was the best wicket to bat on. It wasn't stopping or gripping. They bowled well and we didn't. We didn't quite do the same thing we did in the chases we pulled off," said the Afghan pacer.

India continues to dominate Bangladesh

The visitors defeat the hosts by 56 runs via the Duckworth-Lewis method as the match was reduced to 14-overs-a-side due to rain

CRICKET

Press Trust of India
SYLHET

India continued its dominant run against Bangladesh with a 56-run win via the Duckworth-Lewis method in the rain curtailed fourth women's T20 here on Monday.

A late start and then over an hour-long delay due to persistent rain and hail meant that the contest had to be shortened.

Harmanpreet Kaur (39) and Richa Ghosh (24) shared a 44-run stand to help India post 122 for six after persistent rain reduced the contest to 14 overs a side.

The hosts had to chase 125 in 14 overs under the DLS method to secure the first win of the series.

India handed a maiden debut to 33-year-old leg-spinner Asha Sobhana.

Earlier, playing her 300th international game, Harmanpreet was involved in a crucial partnership with the big-hitting Richa (24) to boost India's total.

Crucial: Richa and Harmanpreet's partnership helped India to a winning score in a truncated contest. X@BCCIWOMEN

The scores: India 122/6 in 14 overs (Harmanpreet 39, Marufa Akter 2/24, Rabeya Khan 2/28) bt Bangladesh 68/7 (Deepti Sharma 2/13, Asha Sobhana 2/18).

Toss: Bangladesh.

PoM: Harmanpreet.

India won by 56 runs by DLS method to lead the series 4-0.

Rublev battles past Auger-Aliassime to clinch the Madrid Open title

Agence France-Presse
MADRID

Andrey Rublev won the Madrid Open with a hard-fought 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 victory over Felix Auger-Aliassime on Sunday to secure his second title of the year.

The Russian World No. 8 had lost four consecutive matches before arriving in the Spanish capital, but came from a set down to beat his Canadian opponent and claim a career second Masters 1000 victory.

Rublev, 26, triumphed at the Hong Kong Open in January but struggled since before turning around his form in Madrid, dropping just one set on the way to what proved a tense final.

The result:

Final: Rublev bt Auger-Aliassime 4-6, 7-5, 7-5.

SNAPSHOTS

Indian pugilists punch five gold medals

Indian boxers claimed five gold medals in the youth category – three men and two women – while nine others finished with silver medals at the ASBC Asian Under-22 & Youth boxing championships in Astana on Monday.

Brijesh Tamta (48kg) and Aryan Hooda (51kg) registered unanimous 5-0 wins against Tajikistan's Muminov Muinkhodzha and Kyrgyzstan's Kamilov Zafarbek in their respective finals.

Meanwhile, Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg) had to work hard against Gafurov Ruslan of Tajikistan before registering a 4-1 victory.

Among the women, reigning junior World champion Nisha took gold in the 52kg, winning 5-0 against Kazakhstan's Otynbay Bagzhan.

Laxmi (50kg) dominated completely to force a Referee Stops Contest in the second round against Enkh Nomundari of Mongolia.

Sagar Jakhar (60kg), Priyanshu (71kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Aryan (92kg), Tamanna (54kg), Nikita Chand (60kg), Shrushti Sathe (63kg), Rudrika (75kg) and Khushi Pooniya (81kg) came second best.

WC-winning coach Menotti passes away

FIFA World Cup-winning coach Cesar Luis Menotti, who led Argentina to the title in 1978, has died at the age of 85, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) said on Sunday.

Juventus misses chance to close in on AC Milan

Juventus was held to a 1-1 draw at AS Roma on Sunday and missed the chance to close in on AC Milan in second place in Serie A. Juve now has 66 points, five behind AC Milan which drew 3-3 with Genoa earlier in the day.

The results: Serie A: Cagliari 1 (Mina 26) drew with Lecce 1 (Krstovic 84); AC Milan 3 (Florenzi 45, Gabbia 72, Giroud 76) drew with Genoa 3 (Retegui 5-pen, Ekuban 48, Thiaw 87-og); Roma 1 (Lukaku 15) drew with Juventus 1 (Bremer 31).

LaLiga: Osasuna 0 lost to Real Betis 2 (Perez 41, Fornals 45+3); Celta Vigo 3 (Aspas 22-pen, Larsen 39, Douvikas 82) bt Villarreal 2 (Moreno 12, Guedes 65); Valencia 0 lost to Alaves 1 (Lopez 68); Rayo Vallecano 0 lost to Almeria 1 (Lozano 30); Sevilla 3 (Acuna 11, En-Nesyri 51, Lukebakio 80) bt Granada 0.

Young champs: Brijesh (48kg), Aryan (51kg), Yashwardhan (63.5kg), Laxmi (50kg), and Nisha (52kg). INSTAGRAM/ASBC_OFFICIAL

Norris. GETTY IMAGES

Norris trumps Verstappen for maiden F1 triumph

Lando Norris took advantage of a timely caution, scored his first career victory and handed Max Verstappen his first South Florida defeat, taking the win on Sunday in the Miami Grand Prix at Miami International Autodrome in Miami Gardens, Florida.

The results:

1. Lando Norris (McLaren) 1h, 30:49.876, 2. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) + 7.612, 3. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 9.920, 4. Carlos Sainz Jr. (Ferrari) 11.407, 5. Sergio Perez (Red Bull) 14.650, 6. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 16.585, 7. Yuki Tsunoda (Racing Bulls) 26.185, 8. George Russell (Mercedes) 34.789, 9. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin) 37.107 10. Esteban Ocon (Alpine) 39.746, 11. Nico Hulkenberg (Haas) 40.789, 12. Pierre Gasly (Alpine) 44.958, 13. Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 49.756, 14. Guanyu Zhou (Sauber) 49.979, 15. Daniel Ricciardo (Racing Bulls) 50.956, 16. Valtteri Bottas (Sauber) 52.356, 17. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin) 55.173, 18. Kevin Magnussen (Haas) 1:04.683, 19. Alexander Albon (Williams) 1:16.091l; DNF: Logan Sargeant (Williams).

The standings (top five):

Drivers: 1. Verstappen 136 pts., 2. Perez 101, 3. Leclerc 98, 4. Sainz Jr. 85, 5. Norris 83.

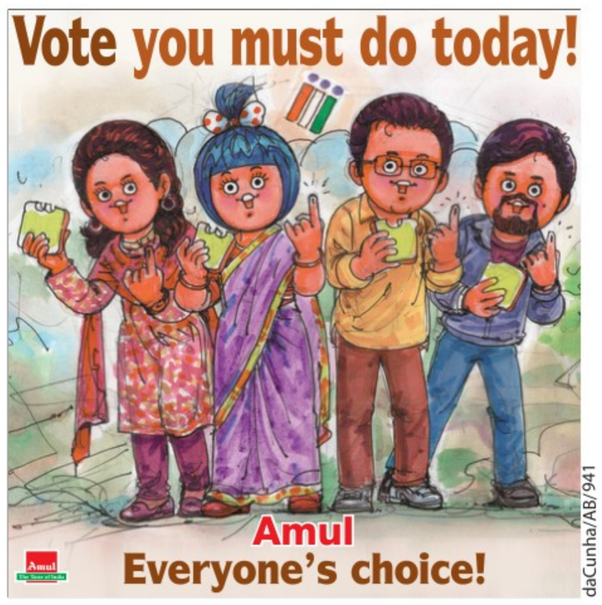
Constructors: 1. Red Bull 237 pts., 2. Ferrari 189, 3. McLaren 124, 4. Mercedes 64, 5. Aston Martin 42.

Indian 4x400m relay teams qualify for Paris

The Indian men's and women's 4x400m relay teams qualified for Paris Olympics after finishing second in their respective second-round heats at the World Athletics Relays here on Monday.

In the women's competition, the quartet of Rupal Chaudhary, M.R. Poovamma, Jyothika Sri Dandi and Subha Venkatesan clocked 3 minutes and 29.35 seconds to finish second behind Jamaica (3:28.54) in heat number one to book a Paris Games ticket.

Later, the men's squad of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Arokia Rajiv and Amoj Jacob finished with a collective timing of 3 minutes and 3.23 seconds to also finish second in their heat, behind USA (2:59.95).



Jones, Wheal return to Scotland squad

T20 WORLD CUP

Press Trust of India
EDINBURGH

Michael Jones and Brad Wheal returned to Scotland's 15-member T20 World Cup squad, while seasoned Somerset pacer Josh Davey missed out.

Oldest player

Uganda off-spinner Frank Nsubuga is set to become the oldest cricketer to play in the T20 World Cup at the age of 43.

On Monday, the Uganda Cricket Association announced a 15-member squad for the marquee event, the country's first-ever appearance in the main round of the competition.

The squads: Scotland: Richie Berrington (capt.), Matthew Cross, Brad Currie, Chris Greaves, Oli Hairs, Jack Jarvis, Michael Jones, Michael Leask, Brandon McMullen, George Munsey, Safyaan Sharif, Chris Sole, Charlie Tear, Mark Watt and Brad Wheal.

Frank Nsubuga (Uganda)

Uganda: Brian Masaba (capt.), Riazat Ali Shah (vice-capt.), Kenneth Waiswa, Dinesh Nakrani, Frank Nsubuga, Ronak Patel, Roger Mukasa, Cosmas Kyewuta, Bilal Hassun, Fred Achelam, Robinson Obuya, Simon Ssesazi, Henry Ssenyondo, Alpesh Ramjani and Juma Miyaji. **Reserve players:** Ronald Lutaaya and Innocent Mwebaze.

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe: 3rd T20I, FanCode, 2.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday)